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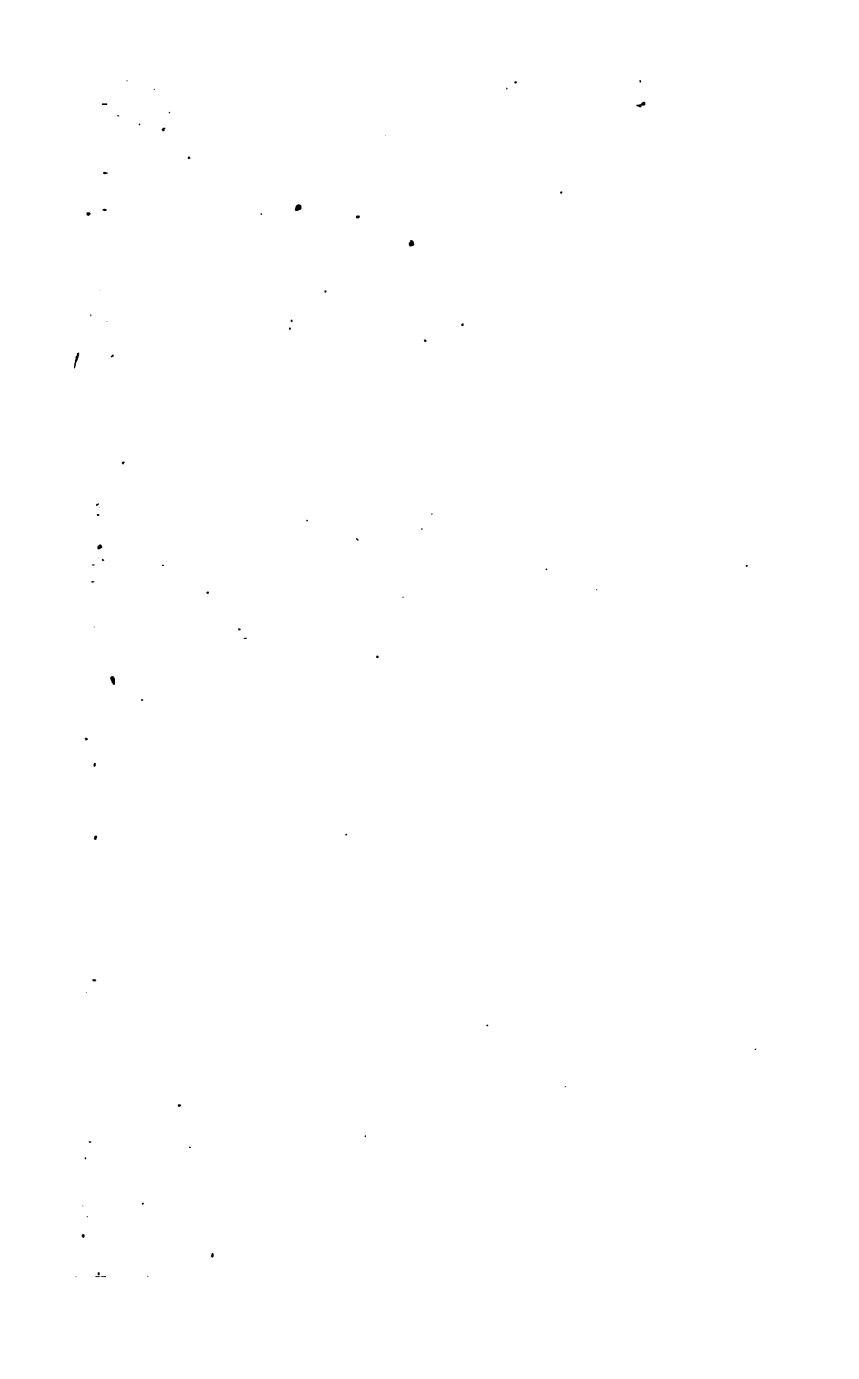
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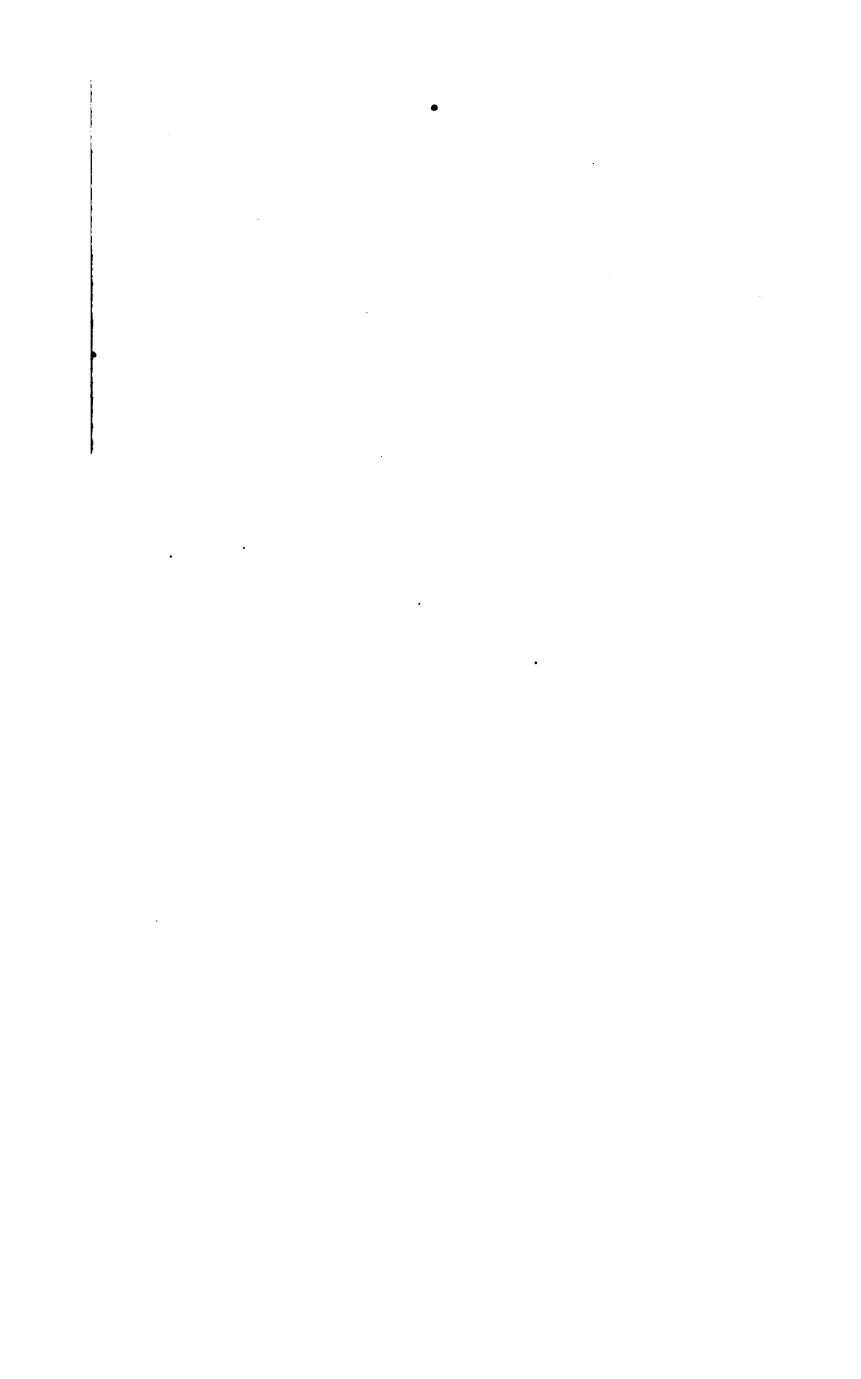


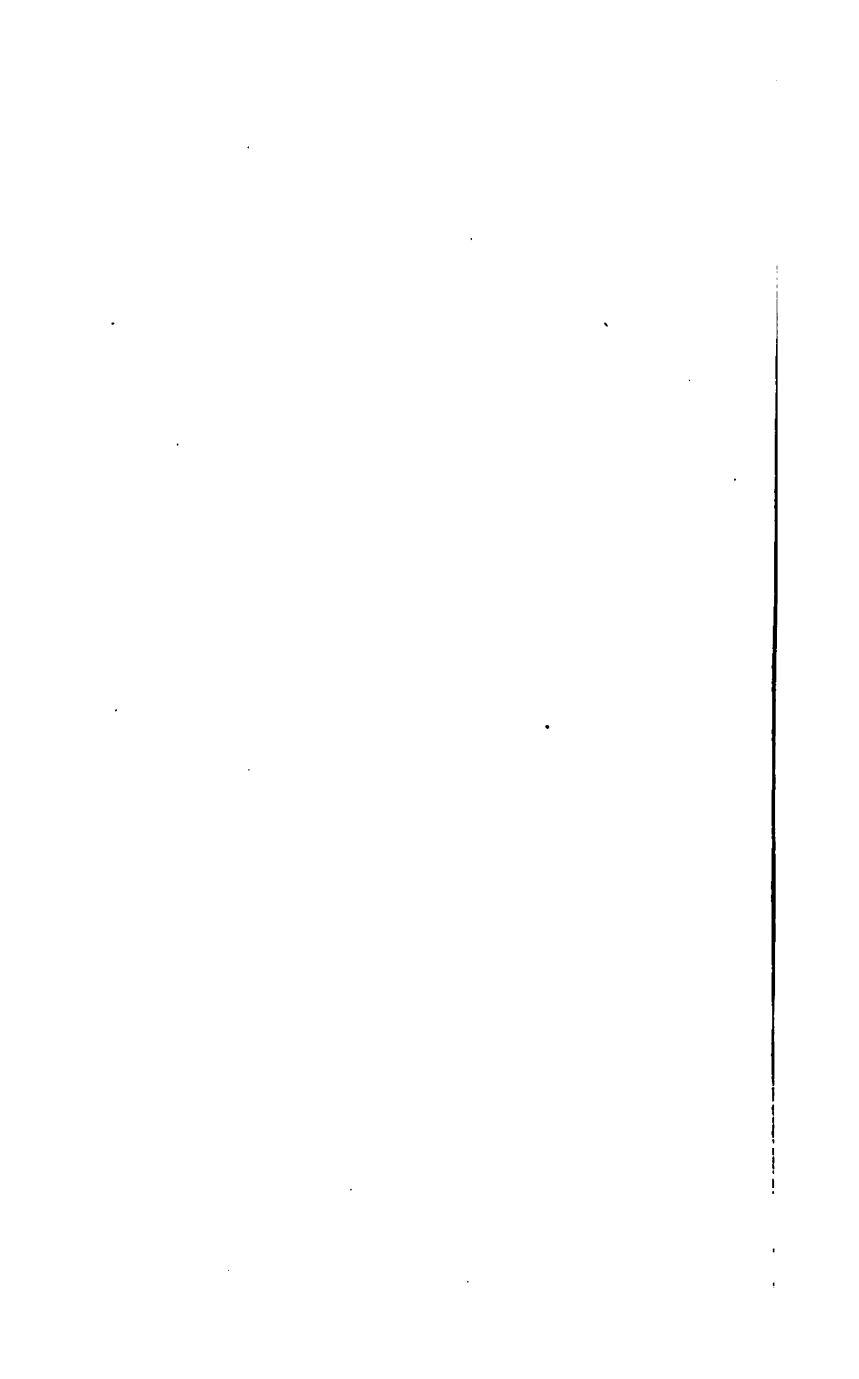
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THE
BENEVOLENT MERCHANT;

OR, THE
Dealings of God in Providence and Grace.

A NARRATIVE INTENDED TO GUIDE
YOUNG DISCIPLES
IN FORMING A RIGHT JUDGMENT OF THE DIVINE PURPOSE IN THE
VARIOUS EVENTS OF HUMAN LIFE.

~~~~~  
**BY M. N.**  
~~~~~

"What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

JOHN xiii. 7.

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain:
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

COWPER.



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PREFACE.

THE following tale is offered to the rising generation with the wish that (under the divine blessing) its perusal may, in some degree, lead to the conviction that the ways of wisdom “are ways of pleasantness,” and that “all her paths are peace.”

The Writer lays no claim to the merit of *originality*; but she feels it proper to state that she has been careful to inculcate, in these pages, such sentiments only as are sanctioned by the *plainest* declarations of Scripture.



THE
BENEVOLENT MERCHANT.

CHAPTER I.

How sweet the promise to the youthful mind;
That they, who early seek, shall early find.

Prov. viii. 17.

MARIA WILSON and Emma Darnley were quite unknown to each other until they met at Merton Grove, an establishment conducted by Mrs. Arnold. The carriage, which left Maria under the care of her new preceptress, had just rolled from the door, when another arrived with Emma Darnley, accompanied by her mamma.

Mrs. Darnley, wishing to have some private conversation with Mrs. Arnold, took an affectionate, though hasty, leave of Emma, who she begged might be conducted to her future companions.

Emma, although a girl of a very buoyant spirit and lively imagination, was possessed of a very affectionate heart. The tear started from her eye, as she bade her tender mamma adieu. She was soon seated in the schoolroom, near Maria Wilson, whose gentle spirit was rather overcome, when she found herself in a room full of strangers, who were already acquainted with one another, and were in groups relating among themselves what had passed during their holidays. But their volubility was soon hushed by their observing the new comers in the room. Nothing but whispering was now heard. "Who are they?" was the general enquiry, uttered in a suppressed tone.—"Where did they come from?" whispered one;—"I do not think they are sisters," said another;—while a third remarked, "I wonder if we shall like them!"

The two strangers looked at each other. Emma, who was quick and openhearted, said to Maria, in a low tone:—"It is rather awkward not to know anybody; but we shall get acquainted in time, and I think I shall like *you* for a companion." Maria turned towards the good-natured girl, who

was about her own age, and, smiling through her tears, replied,—“I hope we shall be allowed to keep together; I shall be glad to have you for my friend.”

At this moment, Mrs. Arnold entered, and desired her former pupils to shew every kind attention to their new companions.

Mrs. Arnold was what is generally termed a very clever woman. She possessed indeed many excellent qualities: added to a considerable degree of general knowledge, she had a good memory, much self-possession, and, when she chose to unbend, much sweetness of manner. She was careful to cultivate a modest deportment in her pupils; very unlike that forwardness and display of talent so much looked for in these degenerate days. She was strictly correct in her transactions; and, although her time and care were incessantly occupied by the concerns of her school, she took a pride in continually doing acts of kindness to the poor in her neighbourhood. In short, there were many amiable traits in Mrs. Arnold: but, alas! in regard to the most important of all properties, she was in no better state

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than he, to whom it was said by the Searcher of hearts, "One thing thou lackest!" Mark x. 21.

There was, however, at Merton Grove, another character of a very different description, to whom also I must beg to introduce my young readers. Miss Melville, the principal teacher in the establishment, was endowed with very superior accomplishments; and was justly admired for her extensive erudition, her humble demeanour, the suavity of her temper, and the commanding influence she possessed over the minds of her pupils. But she gladly laid every talent at the foot of the cross. She had been much in the school of affliction, where she had learned to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

This humble Christian felt an earnest desire to bring her youthful charge to the knowledge of her beloved Saviour; and often laboured to convince them of the corruption of the heart in its natural state—its pride, deceitfulness, and depravity. She felt that she was intrusted with the light of the Gospel, not that it should be concealed from others, but that, under the

Lord's blessing, she might be the means of guiding her pupils in the way of life.

The sedate, sensible, affectionate Maria, and the lively and equally affectionate Emma, grew in their attachment to each other. If Maria's intelligent countenance was ever clouded, Emma's sympathy was all alive to know the cause: and when Emma's thoughtlessness exposed her to censure, Maria would gently chide her impetuosity.

Several weeks had passed away at Merton Grove, when one morning the young party were recreating themselves in the pleasant grounds which surrounded the house. Emma missed her companion; she went through the shrubbery again and again, and, at length, found her alone, sitting in an arbour, and looking very sorrowful.

"What! all alone, and looking so sad!" said the good-natured girl: "are you ill?"

"No," said Maria, "I am quite well; but my mind is ill at ease."

"Your mind ill! I should think nothing can ever ail *your* mind: you are always so good."

"So much the worse," rejoined Maria, "that I should be so deceitful."

"You, Maria, deceitful!"

"Yes, Emma, the sermon I heard yesterday has brought my sin to remembrance."

"Ah! my dear, I never can remember sermons. Let us see; what was the text?"

"It was out of Jeremiah: the seventeenth chapter and ninth verse.—'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?' Ah! my dear Emma, I think I shall never forget it. While Mr. Jervis was preaching, I felt as though he knew all that was in my heart,—as if some one had told him what a wicked thing I had been guilty of."

"Well, Maria; but what was this wicked thing, as you call it?"

"It was indeed most wicked and sinful; because my dear mamma took such pains to shew me——"

At this instant they heard the footsteps of some one approaching. It was Miss Melville. "Oh!" said Maria, "I wish I could tell her."

CHAPTER II.

"Come then, Thon Crucified! my mourning thoughts
O sanctify! Reveal thy bleeding form
To me, miserable."——

MISS MELVILLE, perceiving the two friends in close conversation, was unwilling to interrupt them: but Emma immediately told her Maria was unhappy, and added,—“Ah! Ma’am, I wish she would tell you all about it, because I am sure you could comfort her.”

Maria then, with many tears, informed her, that, having had a theme to write, which she found very difficult, she asked Miss Burlton, the under-teacher, to help her; and that, when she shewed it up, the composition was highly praised: that Mrs. Arnold’s commendations gave her some uneasiness at the time; but that the sermon she heard on Sunday made her feel very unhappy. “Oh!” exclaimed the weeping Maria, “how can I ever be

forgiven? how hateful must I appear before God, for he knows all that is in the heart!"

Emma listened to this confession with surprise: she could not comprehend why her friend should feel such deep sorrow. Miss Melville, however, perceived that the heart of the young penitent was under divine teaching, and that the Spirit of God had begun to reveal to her the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

"My dear Maria," said she, in that gentle, persuasive manner, which was so peculiarly her own, "we are all naturally, in ourselves and in our own doings, offensive to the heart-searching God: nor can we ever deserve to be forgiven. But is there not 'a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness?' Call to mind how beautifully Mr. Jervis explained that passage in the prophet: (Isaiah liii. 5:) 'But he was wounded for our transgressions,' &c. 'Of whom,' he asked, 'does the prophet speak? An apostle has told us: it is of Jesus Christ.' Now then, my dear Maria," continued Miss Melville, "try to cast your burden upon Him. He is full of compassion. Your conduct in regard to the

theme was highly culpable; and the guilt of it can only be washed away by the blood of Him who was wounded for our transgressions. Seek him, trust him. He gathers the lambs with his arm, and carries them in his bosom." To these words of encouragement, she added some serious but kind admonitions, and returned to the house.

After this, Miss Melville took an early opportunity of getting a further insight into the state of Maria's mind. She found her deeply conscious of her sinfulness in the sight of God, and earnestly seeking mercy. The youthful enquirer, with a childlike distrust of herself, was waiting to be upheld and guided: while her experienced friend would frequently take occasion to lay open before her, out of the Scriptures, "the path of life."

In this state of things it was that, after the lapse of nearly the second year of Maria's residence at Merton Grove, her papa came one day to see her rather unexpectedly. She was sent for out of the schoolroom, and was overjoyed to see him. Her looks satisfied her delighted father that she was well and happy.

"My dear child," said Mr. Wilson, "I have been getting my business arranged on a more limited scale: so that I shall be more at home; and I must have you at home too. At the close of this year, therefore, you will bid adieu to school."

Maria made no reply, but, to her papa's surprise, looked very thoughtful: the silent tear was even stealing down her cheek. She was thinking of her dear Miss Melville, and of the happy hours she had spent with her in searching the Scriptures and in prayer. She thought too of her beloved Emma, whom she had already persuaded to seek the things in which she herself had experienced such true peace.

But my young readers may wish to know a little of the character and history of Maria's fond parent.

Mr. Wilson was a widower. His beloved wife died, to his inconsolable grief, in an attack of rheumatic fever; after having tenderly reared their only child, Maria, whom she had trained up in the elementary parts of education, with the strictest regard to her morals. Mr. Wilson inherited a large property from his father, which he had embarked in an ex-

tensive business; and to this his attention was necessarily recalled, as soon as his spirits had sufficiently recovered from the effects of his affliction.

Mrs. Pearson, a sister of Mrs. Wilson's, was with her during her illness, and remained at Mr. Wilson's a short time after the mournful event. But being anxious to return to her husband and family, she advised the afflicted widower, as soon as he could, to seek relief in renewing his attention to business. She also strongly urged the propriety of placing Maria in a school. This seasonable advice was listened to, and Maria was left by her disconsolate father under the care of Mrs. Arnold, while he applied himself to his mercantile affairs.

After about eighteen months, however, he succeeded in forming a plan for the management of his extensive concerns; so as to admit of his being more at his own residence, which was in the vicinity of a large seaport town; where he carried on the chief of his transactions. He, therefore, resolved on having his daughter again at home, and wrote to Mrs. Pearson to find him a sensible educated woman, who

could attend on his daughter, take care of her while he would be from home, and also be with her while receiving lessons from masters, whom he would engage for her from the neighbouring town.

Mrs. Pearson, at first, expressed herself in doubt whether this arrangement would prove a good one: but, knowing Mr. Wilson's excessive anxiety about his daughter, she promised to make every enquiry for the kind of person he wished to have.

CHAPTER III.

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace:
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

Cowper.

THE next post brought Mr. Wilson a letter from Mrs. Pearson to this effect:—

"Leybourn Cottage,

"Nov. 2nd.

"DEAR BROTHER,

"It is singular, that immediately after I had dispatched my former letter a person called, whom I had not seen for some years: in fact, I thought she had been dead. She was dressed in the deepest mourning; so that I could not easily recognise her. When a girl, she was well known to me and your dear lamented partner; for she was the daughter of a surgeon living in the same village with us, and we often spent our play-hours together.

"She has passed through a series of heart-rending trials.

“ But I must not now enter upon the particulars of her history, which, to a benevolent disposition like yours, will be deeply affecting. The circumstances too which led to my meeting with her are truly remarkable. These I will send you in a day or two.

“ I merely write this much now to prevent your engaging any person for the situation, until you hear what further I have to tell you about my poor afflicted traveller, who appears to me well qualified for undertaking the charge of my dear niece.

“ In great haste, and with Charles’s love,

“ I remain, affectionately yours,

“ H. PEARSON.”

Mr. Wilson waited rather impatiently for the promised narrative, which, after two posts, reached him in the following letter:—

“ Leybourn Cottage,

“ Nov. 4th.

“ DEAR BROTHER,

“ You have often called me an enthusiast; but after you have read my account of Rachel Parry, whom I mentioned in my letter on Tuesday, I think you will confess that there are some persons over whom God exercises a special care. Excuse my giving you some minute par-

ticulars, which appear to me the connected links in a chain of providences, all bringing about the happy result which I trust will eventually take place.

“Mrs. Parry’s husband was a naval officer, who, three years since, was lost at sea. She then entered upon a small business, which she carried on with the aid of her daughter rather successfully. But her poor child’s health began to fail. It was a lingering illness, during which the afflicted mother could do little else but watch the slow but fatal progress of the disease, which at length bereaved her of her only earthly companion.

“In the mean time her little business dwindled away, and she found herself involved in debt. She laid the state of her affairs before her creditors; some of whom pitied her misfortunes, while others unfeelingly demanded that everything she possessed should be given up. Stripped of all, she resolved to seek her native country, with the hopes of finding some means of support, and, if possible, of completing the payment of her debts. The wife of one of the creditors, entering into her plans, kindly raised a subscription among her neighbours to enable her to undertake this journey.

“It happened that her route lay through this place, and that an accident occurred to the coach just as it reached the inn, which rendered it im-

possible to proceed; so that, instead of merely changing horses, and starting again in a few minutes, the passengers found they would be detained more than an hour.

“You will soon perceive, my dear brother, why I mention these circumstances.

“One of the passengers was so anxious to proceed, that he protested loudly against waiting here to get the coach repaired, and urged the coachman to attempt reaching the next town first. The coachman was nearly persuaded to this, when another of the passengers interposed. This was a venerable-looking person, apparently a clergyman, who said he thought the coach so much injured, that it would endanger their lives to make the attempt. The other gentleman seemed much chagrined at this interference. But the clergyman said, human life was not to be trifled with; and added, ‘I cannot help thinking that, however inconvenient this delay may be to us, there is something or other connected with it, which will turn out for the good of some one: for,’ he continued, ‘there is certainly a people for whom all things work together for good.’

“‘I suppose then,’ said the other, ‘you think yourself to be one of those favourites of Providence?’

“‘Sir,’ rejoined the clergyman, with the meekest expression of countenance, ‘I sincerely wish that both of us,—yes, and that our widowed fellow-

traveller too, (looking with much compassion at Mrs. Parry,) may see the good of his chosen people!’

“No further objection was now made to the immediate repair of the carriage; the broken wheel was taken off, and Mrs. Parry had retired to the inn, where she sat fatigued and dejected at the prospect of future trials: yet, she says, the remarkable words which dropped from the good clergyman were continually recurring to her mind with a sort of comfort she cannot describe. While thus absorbed in her reflections, she was roused by the sound of a voice which seemed familiar to her. It proceeded from some one of the bystanders, who were conversing in the street, close to the window where she was sitting. The accent of the speaker was that of a native of Wales. She looked out, and perceived it was an elderly man, who, when she was a child, was living in her native village. She addressed him, but he was that moment hastily leaving the group, and did not hear her. She could not remember his name, but spoke again louder and unconsciously in the Welsh language. The sound of his native tongue, which of late he so seldom heard, instantly caught his ear. He turned back, and, at her request, came into the room. This was no other than our old Samuel, who, after the death of my father, came into our service as gardener.

“After awhile he began to recollect who Mrs. Parry was, and could answer some of her anxious enquiries about her old connexions. ‘But,’ said she, ‘can you tell me what is become of the Lewises?’

“‘O!’ replied Samuel, ‘the old people are dead; and the young ones,—two of them are in foreign parts, nobody knows where, and the other two are living a sad life, spending all the old folks left them, and, it is said, will soon be without a penny.’ This intelligence deeply affected the poor widow, for these were the relatives on whom she had placed all her hopes.

“Samuel’s feelings too were much moved when he saw her grief. The tears flowed down his furrowed cheeks, while he laboured to quiet his emotions; until at length recollecting himself, and perceiving every moment was precious, he exclaimed, ‘O! but my mistress must see you before you go. Let us make haste to the house; it is not far: there will be time, for they have not got the wheel on yet.’ Mrs. Parry followed him, scarcely knowing what she was doing. You may imagine her surprise when she found who I was. I have, of course, induced her to stay with us a short time.

“Now I do think this is the very person to have charge of your dear girl. I have been conversing with her, and find her as worthy of my regard as she ever was. Endowed with good

sense and tenderness of disposition, she seems to me admirably adapted to the situation. I shall at all events detain her, until I hear from you. Charles unites with me in kind love.

“ Believe me,

“ Dear Brother, yours, &c.

“ H. PEARSON.”

Mr. Wilson instantly replied as follows:—

“ Norgrove, Nov. 6th.

“ MY DEAR HARRIET,

“ I am greatly interested by your account of the Widow Parry. Pray engage her on liberal terms. As soon as I have fixed the time I will let you know, and I hope you will come over with her and arrange matters for us. I just inclose a small sum of money, which Mrs. Parry must accept as the gift of one that pities the distressed. It will serve to pay off the more pressing demands, and to assure her creditors the remainder shall be settled in due time.

“ Excuse great haste, and, with love to Charles, and many thanks, believe me, &c. &c.

“ F. WILSON.”

“ P. S. Mrs. Parry must not thank me for what I send. The truth is—how can I withhold

my assistance from one, who, you tell me, was, in her youthful days, the frequent companion of my ever-lamented Helen?"

The time was now come for Maria to leave Merton Grove. Mrs. Arnold was more affected at her departure than she had ever been at the removal of any of her pupils; and said, that, although Miss Wilson was a little "righteous overmuch," yet her religion could not be a very bad one, for she had been quite the ornament of her school. Maria had been allowed by her father to invite Miss Melville and Emma Darnley to spend part of the next vacation at Norgrove House. This softened the distress at parting.

Mrs. Parry entered upon her new occupation with a grateful desire to serve Mr. Wilson and his daughter in the faithful discharge of its duties. In religion, however, she was at present little more than a moralist. To fulfil her duty in her own strength was the chief source of her comfort. And as the sentiments of the clergyman whose church the Norgrove family attended, were of a similar kind, there seemed little likelihood of her being

led to see her error. Maria became much attached to her. She felt, however, the want of that communion of feeling which she had enjoyed in the society of her beloved Miss Melville, and which she in vain sought for in one who was yet a stranger to the love of Christ.

CHAPTER IV.

"Is there no guide to shew that path?—
The Bible!—He alone, who hath
The Bible, need not stray.—"

Montgomery.

ONE morning Mr. Wilson entered the study with a degree of distress in his looks.

"Is anything the matter, papa?" enquired Maria.

"My love," said he, "I have just received letters from abroad, informing me of the melancholy news of the sudden death of my partner at Hamburgh. I must immediately go over, and remain there, I fear, a considerable time, to settle the accounts, and to place my business there in safe hands. I shall find it hard to leave you, my child; but Mrs. Parry appears to be so trustworthy, that I feel quite satisfied my darling girl will be in safe keeping."

"O, my dear papa," said Maria, "I hope you will be kept by an eye that never slumbers."

Mr. Wilson sighed, and said, "My dear child, I fear you are too good, too heavenly, to be long detained in a world like this. But I hope you will want no comfort while I am away. I have written too to your Aunt Harriet, to ask her to come and spend part of the time with you, if she can leave her own home."

"But, papa," said Maria, "I am very far from being heavenly. Surely you do not know what I am. The Bible tells us we are all fallen sinners, and must be born again."

Mr. Wilson here broke off the conversation, and began to prepare for his journey. Maria could not perceive that he had put a Bible among his things; and, having carefully wrapped up one that had been used by her mamma, she went to his room and said, "Papa, you will want a Bible: here is one, which I have packed up, and will put into the corner of this trunk, if you will permit me." He sighed, and assented; and Maria deposited the volume in a trunk, which

was on the floor, with the lid open and nearly filled with clothes.

It will be readily perceived by my readers, that Mr. Wilson was at this period a stranger to the doctrines of the cross. He was affectionate and kind in his disposition, and never felt himself so happy as when he was occupied in advancing the happiness of others. His purse was always open to the claims of distress. He seemed to measure a gift simply by the necessities of the applicant; so that, while he merely followed his habitual propensity to help others out of their troubles, his liberality, which was scarcely known to himself, was oftentimes the admiration of the surrounding neighbourhood.

I will here give my readers an anecdote, which will serve to illustrate this pleasing trait in Mr. Wilson's character. After Mrs. Parry had been long enough at Norgrove to enable Mr. Wilson to form a decided opinion of her character, he took an opportunity of acquainting himself more fully with the state of her affairs. At his desire, she procured an authenticated statement of all the demands which were still unsettled. Having reserved an

early hour one morning for examining and arranging this account; he sent for her into his private room, and thus addressed her:—"Mrs. Parry, I am well convinced the embarrassments which occurred in your affairs were such as you could not prevent, during the unfortunate illness and other troubles which happened in your family. I have looked over this statement, and am resolved to have it all settled immediately; which I am sure will be a relief to your mind: for I have watched your looks lately, and have often thought this business has pressed upon your spirits. Now, make no objections: say nothing about the hardheartedness of some of the parties who were unhappily involved in these difficulties. Write to the friend, who so kindly looked after the accounts, and desire him to draw upon me for a sum equal to the whole amount of the remaining debts, and to pay them off as soon as possible. Do not thank me, Mrs. Parry; it is not much. You will be more happy, I know, when it is all settled." And then gently pressing her hand, he left her overwhelmed with surprise and gratitude.

Still, Mr. Wilson was but a moral cha-

racter, under no better influence than that which arises out of certain providential circumstances, with a disposition, rendered, by a favourable training in early life, more amiable than is usual among the inhabitants of a fallen world. In matters of religion, he seemed to feel little concern. Though he manifested a great degree of reverence for its forms, yet the scanty attention he paid to them was a heartless service; while his family were never called together for domestic worship excepting on Sundays.

Maria, however highly she revered her beloved father's character, was now fully convinced that he was destitute of "the one needful thing." Often did she feel a wish to learn what his thoughts were on this all-momentous subject: but he gave her no encouragement; on the contrary, every religious remark was met by a repulsiveness of manner, unnatural to him, and therefore the more painful to her tender mind.

The evening before his departure, he placed in Mrs. Parry's hands several sums of money for charitable purposes, which he specified, adding, "If the stock should become exhausted before I return, send

to me for more." After a short pause, he continued,—“But now, Mrs. Parry, there is another subject, which, as we are alone, it will be a good opportunity to mention. I refer to my dear child. Maria is now at an age when the character begins to form itself. Much, therefore, will depend upon her present associates and pursuits. But have you not observed that she has taken quite a *religious* turn? I mean in a *methodistical* kind of way?”

“I have thought the same, Sir,” said Mrs. Parry, “and have regretted it much: but then, Miss Wilson is so free from pride, and so amiable, that——”

“That you would find it hard to thwart her,” added Mr. Wilson: “still some gentle means may be tried to prevent its becoming a decided habit. Persuade her to be less alone, reading and poring over those musty old books that were lent her at Merton Grove. Divert her mind with innocent amusements, and get her out frequently for air and exercise. Now, I am aware that my Sister Pearson is what would be called a *religious person*, much more so than I conceive necessary. But then she is old enough to be in no danger

of any great extreme. I have a great horror of *methodism*, especially in young persons."

The next morning, after taking an affectionate leave of his daughter, and commending her anew to Mrs. Parry's care, Mr. Wilson hastily seated himself in the carriage, and was soon out of sight.

The departure of her beloved parent to a foreign land would be felt by Maria with no slight degree of emotion. This young Christian had, however, learned to exercise herself in the privilege of committing herself and all she held dear to the care of her heavenly Father. After watching the last glimpse she could obtain of the carriage, she retired to her room, and sought relief in prayer. While she was thus engaged, she was interrupted by a gentle tapping at the door. It was Mrs. Parry. "My dear Miss Wilson," said she, "will you not come and take a short walk? Your papa said there was a poor sick widow at Betty Aston's, and wished us to make enquiry about her." Maria instantly prepared to obey the summons.

As they passed through the hall, the postman arrived with letters: Upon one

of these Maria recognised the handwriting of her aunt, Mrs. Pearson, who had written to inform her of some afflicting circumstances, which would oblige her to postpone her intended visit to Norgrove House. Mrs. Pearson said she regretted it very much, as she had not only promised herself the pleasure of seeing her dear niece, but also of spending a few days in Mrs. Parry's society, whom she was anxious to see again. She concluded thus:—

“ But what can we look for on this side eternity, but crosses and disappointments? Even should we never meet again in the wilderness, through which we are now travelling, we have no right to complain. Every tear will be dry, when we find ourselves in the presence of the Lamb. Yet, my dear Maria, I do much wish to see you, and to hear what you have to tell me about your valuable friend, Miss Melville, of whom you write in such high terms. How rapidly time flies! Who would think that it is so long since I saw my beloved niece! It is now many months since I had that pleasure. Remember me with kind love to Mrs. Parry, and believe me

“ Your ever affectionate aunt,

“ H. PEARSON.”

"I should, indeed, like very much to see my aunt *now*," said Maria.

"Why *now*?" enquired Mrs. Parry: "did you not always like to be with her?"

"Yes," answered Maria; "but *now*, I think I *feel* what she says: *before*, I thought nothing about it."

"But, my dear, is it so necessary to *feel* on such subjects as your aunt is apt to talk about? For my part, I cannot even understand her meaning; though I have no doubt it is all very good. And I think, if we are careful to do what we can, our blessed Redeemer will supply what is deficient."

"Ah!" rejoined Maria, "how I wish you could hear the good old clergyman we used to hear, when I was at school! He often shewed us how dangerous it is to think in that way. And then, in regard to *feeling*, he once told us, I remember, that if even the loss of friends and property would sometimes have such an effect upon the feelings and spirits, as to cause the heart to break with grief, we ought to feel infinitely more from the apprehension of perishing for ever: 'But, O!' he exclaimed, 'how deeply—how very deeply we ought to feel the love of Him, who died to save us!'"

CHAPTER V.

"Source and Giver of repose!
 Singly from thy smile it flows:
 Peace and happiness are thine;
 Mine they are, if Thou art mine.
 Let me but Thyself possess,
 Total sum of happiness!
 Real bliss I then shall prove;
 Heaven below, and heaven above!"

Toplady.

THE time having been arranged for Miss Melville and Emma Darnley to pay their promised visit at Norgrove House, when the day arrived, Maria was rather anxiously looking for them, through an opening in the shrubs that bounded the lawn. At length, she perceived Mr. Darnley's carriage coming up the drive. It was soon at the door. The two visitors were received with most affectionate greetings. Emma could hardly repress her joy. She was delighted with all that Maria shewed her:—her little study, her various kinds of work, her drawings, and some new books

her papa had lately given her on botany; her flower-beds too, and her conservatory. After passing through the garden, they came to a moss-house. —“This,” said Maria, “I have had made on purpose to remind myself and my dear Emma of the pleasant retreat we had at Merton Grove.”

Here, having seated themselves, Emma exclaimed, “O! Maria, how happy you must be!”

“My dear,” rejoined Maria, “you remind me of those lines in one of my favourite books:—

‘How vain are all things here below!
How false, and yet how fair!
Each pleasure has its poison too,
And every sweet a snare!’

How happy it would be, if each of us could adopt for our own the last words of the hymn:—

‘Dear Saviour, let thy beauties be
My soul’s eternal food;
And grace command my heart away
From all created good.’”

“But,” said Emma, “how do you like Mrs. Parry?”

"I like her very much indeed," Maria replied; "but——"

"But what?" asked Emma.

"Why, dearly as I love her, she seems to be quite wrong in her religious views. And then too I am afraid she is not well in health. When papa left home, he told me privately, he suspected her health was declining, and he desired me to write to him, if her cough continued. Now, it has abated, but very little. Though I think she would soon be better, if it were not for one thing that preys much upon her spirits."

"What is that, Maria? Do you know her history?"

"Yes. She has passed through many trials. Her husband died at sea. Since that, she has lost her daughter, a most interesting girl I should think, who died of a decline: and she has had heavy losses in trade. But she told me with tears, that my dear father has paid off all her debts for her. She has still, however, another grief, which, I fear, she must carry with her to the grave. O! if she did but know how to obtain relief from her burdens at the foot of the cross! But, be cautious,

Emma: do not allude to this affliction while she is present: not that she told it me as a secret; but it would renew her grief."

Emma promised not to mention it, and anxiously desired her friend to proceed.

Maria renewed her narrative.—"Poor Mrs. Parry had a son also, of whom she was dotingly fond. As the youth grew up, he became gay and extravagant, and associated with low characters. His indulgent mother in vain expostulated with him. At last, he formed an attachment, which she so strongly objected to, that he ran away with the object of his affections, and has never since been heard of. His afflicted mother concludes he must be dead, as it is now ten years since he absconded. She is always thinking he died in want and misery; very likely in a workhouse or prison. In short, she accuses herself as being in part the cause of his untimely end: for, she says, if she had used milder restraints, or had given way a little to his follies, perhaps he would have stayed at home. Is it not enough to make her very unhappy? though I think the young man had only himself to blame. But, hush!—here she comes with dear Miss Melville."

CHAPTER VI.

"Talk they of morals? O! Thou bleeding Love!
Thou maker of new morals to mankind!
The true morality is—love of Thee!"

Young.

ON the following Sunday, the Norgrove House family went to the church which they usually attended. The sermon was an essay upon Matt. xxv. 23.—"Well done, good and faithful servant." It was short, and written in a pleasing style. The clergyman in reading it too appeared to be much pleased with it himself. His object was to prove, that man has a power of propitiating God by his good works.

On their return, the Norgrove party began to converse about the discourse they had heard. Emma declared she should be very sorry to be obliged to hear such heathen morality, without a word about Jesus Christ. Maria looked at Miss Melville, and smiled. Mrs. Parry ventured to

remind Emma, that the minister did speak of our Saviour repeatedly, when he referred to the example he left us in his own virtue and goodness.

Maria said she should like to hear Miss Melville's opinion of it. The latter then took the opportunity of shewing, that man, being a lost sinner, could only be accounted righteous by the obedience of Christ; and that such a doctrine as that of obtaining the pardon of sin by our own obedience is no where taught in the Bible, and could only bewilder and lead to their undoing such persons as might be desirous to know what they must do to be saved.

Emma enquired who were meant by the good and bad servants in the parable?

"I think, my dear," said Miss Melville, "our Lord refers to true believers by the one, and to self-righteous professors, such as the Pharisees, by the other: and that the parable is intended to teach us the duty and advantage of employing his gifts, in his service, and to his glory: and yet, if this be the purport of the parable, it has no reference to the pardon of sin."

Perceiving that Emma had a Prayer-Book in her hand, she desired her to turn

to the Thirty-nine Articles, and read the Tenth. Emma read as follows:—

“‘The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God: wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.’”

“Now,” said Miss Melville, “read the former part of the Eleventh.”

“‘We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings.’”

Mrs. Parry appeared to listen with serious and thoughtful attention, and said she had never before observed that we were taught such things in the church Prayer-Book.

The next morning, while Mrs. Parry was engaged with the housekeeper, Miss Melville accompanied her young friends in one of Maria's favourite walks. The day was fine, and the beauties of the scenery enhanced the pleasure they en-

joyed in recurring to the days of their early acquaintance. They talked also of Mrs. Parry. Maria was evidently very anxious about her; and Emma, although quite taken up with the pleasing objects that surrounded her, sighed, and expressed a warmhearted wish that she could hear Mr. Jervis preach.

Miss Melville said they must not forget that no preaching could avail either to convert or comfort without the blessing of God's Spirit; she thought, however, there were already some symptoms of the dawnings of grace in Mrs Parry's mind: "For," said she, "I had some close conversation with her last night. We sat talking about 'the one thing needful' for perishing souls to a late hour. She listened to me like a child: so that I do think we have great encouragement. Her sorrowful heart seems like the fallow ground, broken up and prepared for the good seed. Who can tell but she may receive the word, as the Thesalonians did, 'in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost?' My dear Maria, could you not obtain your kind father's permission to come with your sorrowing companion and spend a week or two with

me at my mother's? Your masters have but just begun their vacation; so that it would occasion no interruption in their attendance. We can easily make room for you in the cottage. My mother has passed through many trials, and will know how to comfort poor Mrs. Parry, who will thus have the opportunity of hearing Mr. Jervis. Emma too will come and meet you."

Maria, delighted with the proposal, said she would instantly write to her father.

After some further consultation, whether she should avoid, in her letter, all reference to her object in a *religious* point of view, (that she might not encounter Mr. Wilson's strong prejudices on that ground,) it was decided that she should state openly all she wished. "Tell him," said Miss Melville, "what happiness it will give you, if she derive benefit, not only from change of air, but also from Mr. Jervis's ministry. Thus you will leave the event with Him, who has all hearts at his disposal."

On their return to the house, they all retired to Maria's room, where Miss Melville prayed, with much earnestness, for the Lord's blessing on their design.

The letter was soon dispatched; but many days of anxious suspense intervened, and many fears possessed the mind of Maria Wilson lest her father should oppose her wishes. An unusual delay had taken place in the transmission of letters from the Continent. "Ah! this is to teach me," Maria would often say to herself, "that I have not yet prayed for this thing in faith."

The packet, however, at length arrived. The letter to Maria had been written partly while on the journey, and partly after Mr. Wilson had reached Hamburgh. She hastily turned to the part which bore the latest date. There she found, to her surprise, an unhesitating permission to go to Mrs. Melville's. After expressing his regret that Mrs. Parry was still an invalid, Mr. Wilson desired they would call on their way at his friend Dr. Bayle's, and request him to prescribe for her and see her continually.

"My dear child," he wrote, "do not be uneasy about our poor widow. Let no expence be spared that can in any wise conduce to her comfort and restoration. But how can we repay Miss Mel-

ville's kindness? May God give his blessing to her amiable endeavours to do good to so valuable a person! Alas! my child, all the world cannot make us happy without the favour of God!"

The reader may judge a little of Maria's feelings, when I observe that Mr. Wilson had never before, in any of his letters, made the slightest allusion to religion; but seemed most studiously to avoid the subject. How differently did he now express himself! But I must forbear to notice this circumstance further at present.

CHAPTER VII.

"Lord, in Thy house I'm told there's room;
With doubts and fears, behold, I come:
But can there—tell me—can there be,
Among thy people, room for me?
Yet will I stay, nor hence will go,
Until a blessing Thou bestow."

PASSING over a short interval, I must request my readers to follow me to Maymead, where we shall find our party, consisting of Mrs. and Miss Melville, with Maria Wilson and Mrs. Parry, on the Sabbath morning, just entering the porch of Mr. Jervis's church, while the bells are chiming. Here they are joined by Emma Darnley, who came to sit in Mrs. Melville's pew, her papa's being filled with his own family and some friends. The Melvilles sat in the gallery, whence the lower part of the church was quite open to view. Mrs. Parry, although not yet aware of the great difference between the effects of an evangelical ministry of the word of God,

and the bare observance of its forms, was nevertheless struck with the appearance of the congregation and place. There was a large auditory: the principal aisle was filled with poor persons, many of whom were standing for want of sitting-room: and an air of reverence, earnestness, and animation pervaded the whole assembly.

On the commencement of the service, a stranger appeared in the surplice, and was advancing through the crowded aisle to the desk. Emma instantly pointed him out to Maria, and whispered—"Who can that be? are we not to have Mr. Jervis to-day?" Maria gently checked her, and replied in a whisper—"I fear he is ill; but let us hope it will not be the word of *man* we shall hear, but the word of God, whoever may be sent with it." The prayers being ended, Emma could not avoid watching to see who would be the preacher. Even Maria caught herself now and then casting an anxious look towards the quarter whence he usually came in his way to the pulpit. Presently a venerable head was seen among the people in the aisle, who were reverently making way. It was

the faithful Jervis himself. Emma quietly touched Maria's elbow.

As to Mrs. Parry, to whom hitherto all kinds of sermons had been alike,—“Who was to preach?” was an enquiry in which she felt no concern. Happily, however, her mind was in a teachable frame. She had begun to feel interested in many passages of Scripture that had been pointed out to her. “What must I do to be saved?” was the question that was already beginning to occupy her thoughts. Just at this moment she was deeply absorbed in reflection. They had commenced singing the hymn before sermon: it was that beautiful composition of Cowper: “God moves in a mysterious way”——Some of the lines struck Mrs. Parry with peculiar force. The remarkable manner in which she had found relief in deep distress, and had been brought among persons, who seemed to be sent of God to save her from eternal misery, was all instantly brought to her recollection. “Yes!” said she to herself, “behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face.”

At that instant she happened to raise her eyes, and was looking towards the pul-

pit; but what was her astonishment when she discovered in the face of Mr. Jervis the benign features of the stranger who had so kindly soothed her by his conversation in her memorable journey, had opposed the precipitate departure of the coach from Leybourne, and, in fact, had been the means of bringing her among persons who alone seemed to possess the power of binding up her wounded spirit!

Emma now pulled Maria's sleeve, and whispered almost aloud, "Look at Mrs. Parry! she is as white as a sheet, and is sinking." In an instant Maria caught hold of her, and, with Emma's assistance, prevented her falling. Miss Melville applied her mother's smelling-bottle, and a flood of tears succeeding, poor Mrs. Parry had nearly recovered herself by the time Mr. Jervis had prayed and given out the text. Maria, however, had proposed her leaving the church, and had offered to accompany her. She was much struck with the firm manner in which she answered:—"No, my love; I will not, I cannot leave this place!"

But it was not until Mr. Jervis had made some progress in his subject that Mrs.

Parry's mind became tranquilized. My reader will at once conceive the cause of this, when I point out a singular coincidence which presented itself in the opening of the sermon. The text was a short portion of that striking prayer in Psalm cvi:—"Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance." After noticing the connexion of this passage with the Jewish history, Mr. Jervis proceeded thus:—"But the words before us are as justly applicable to the whole Church of Jesus Christ, that is, to the true Israel of God in every age;—to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call. That there is a people, who are in a special sense the people of God, chosen and called to inherit his kingdom, is implied and taught in every Book of the inspired volume. Christ calls them his sheep, his little flock: his apostles affirm that they are a chosen generation, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that their sins are all forgiven, that they are

called to be saints, are saved by grace, and led by the Spirit of God; that no power can separate them from his love, and that their trials and afflictions are made subservient to their final salvation. For however Satan and the world may labour to conceal the truth, 'we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.' May the Spirit of Christ so direct and bless this feeble attempt to make known the way to Zion, that the poor trembling enquirer may be brought at length to see the good of his chosen people!"

"Surely," thought Mrs. Parry, "he must have known that I should be here: but who could have told him what was passing in my mind?"

The next morning Mr. Jervis called at the cottage. He usually did so on the Monday.

Mr. Melville, who had been his most intimate friend, was an awakening preacher of the truth, and it was under one of his powerful appeals to the conscience, that Mr. Jervis himself was convinced of his need of a Saviour. From that moment Mr.

Jervis regarded Mr. Melville in the light of a spiritual father, and an affectionate intimacy commenced between them, which, however, was unhappily cut short by Mr. Melville's death. His widow was left in straitened circumstances, but being of an active turn of mind, and well educated, she applied all her energies to the instruction of her only child, Eliza, with whose character my readers are already acquainted. The Vicar of Maymead never ceased to shew the widow of his revered friend every attention that could tend to lighten her grief.

He was now, as I have observed, making his usual visit, and found her alone with her daughter; Maria Wilson and Mrs. Parry having retired into another room.

"O! my dear friend," said Mrs. Melville, "I have not seen you since the kind gift you sent me."

"No thanks are due to me," said the vicar: "you may rather thank Eliza; at least, in part."

"Thank *me*?" said Miss Melville; "dear Sir, I knew nothing of the matter, until your letter was opened, when, to our sur-

prise, we found inclosed the bank-note for fifty pounds. How is it possible I could be the cause of such a generous gift?"

"I perceive," Mr. Jervis replied, "I have raised a question which I cannot evade. But I know your kind benefactor would be put to pain should you speak of the circumstance. Therefore please not to mention to any one either the gift or the giver. A short time ago I went to Darnley Lodge, where I found a Mr. Wilson, who was making enquiries about your affairs. You must not be surprised at this, Eliza, for his daughter had told him how you saved your salary at Merton Grove for your dear mother's support. He said his daughter spoke of you with such grateful and affectionate warmth, that he knew nothing would give her so much pleasure as shewing you some mark of gratitude, which he thought would best be done by making your mother a present. He then placed a small envelope in my hand, saying, 'You will greatly oblige me, Sir, if you will take charge of this for the use of Miss Melville's mother.' On his departure, I opened the paper and found

the money inclosed which I sent you. I would have brought it myself, but I was just then preparing for the journey which has detained me so long from home. I enquired if this gentleman were not the benevolent merchant of whom I had heard. 'He is the same,' said Mr. Darnley, 'and I am not a little gratified by his visit; for we have recognised each other as old schoolfellows; but, with all his amiable-ness of character, I tried in vain to draw from him any acknowledgment of a spiritual change.' I said to Mr. Darnley,— 'Who knows what happy results may follow this renewal of your acquaintance?' Darnley shook his head. But you know, Eliza, our excellent friend, Mr. Darnley, is so good a specimen of the true Christian character, that however strong may be Mr. Wilson's prejudices, he may yet possibly be brought to confess that his old friend, Darnley, with all his methodism (as the world calls it) is in the right. Mr. Wilson told us he had taken his daughter from Mrs. Vernon's. He expressed himself, however, perfectly satisfied with all that had been done for her improvement, and said he had removed her merely to have

her society at home. I hope, Eliza, she still gave you good reason to believe she was growing in the knowledge of the best things."

Before Miss Melville could reply to this enquiry, Maria Wilson entered the room. She was not unknown to Mr. Jervis, who expressed both surprise and pleasure at seeing her at Maymead; adding,—“We have just been conversing about your dear father. I do not often enquire into the religious state of parents before their children; but I believe, my young friend, you are not a little anxious on that head?”

Maria replied,—“I think my father has a conviction that real religion is necessary to constitute true happiness, but that it is better to make no profession lest he should not be able to keep up to it. Indeed I cannot help feeling a secret persuasion, which is ever present with me, that God will at length give him a new heart.”

“We will all say—Amen—to that!” said the good pastor.

CHAPTER VIII.

"O how unlike the complex works of man,
Heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan!
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clustering ornaments to clog the pile:
From ostentation, as from weakness, free,
It stands, like the cerulean arch we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity.
Inscribed above the portal, from afar
Conspicuous, as the brightness of a star,
Legible only by the light they give,
Stand the soul-quickenings words—Believe, and Live!"
Cowper.

ELIZA MELVILLE now told Mr. Jervis that they had another visiter in the house, whom he had met with once, but perhaps would not recollect. She would, therefore, beg to introduce her to him, if Maria would go and prevail with her to come in. "She recognised your features, Sir, yesterday; and was under much agitation of mind all day; so that she is very low this morning. She says your sermon recalled most forcibly what you said on that occasion when you met with her: even the very words of the text and several

expressions were the same as she heard you say then. She was at that time in great affliction; but your friendly manner towards her was so different to that of some other persons there, that she was encouraged to cast her cares upon God; at least she tried to do so, but she thinks it was in a very ignorant way. She did not then understand, as she did yesterday, that it is only Christ's own people, to whom all things work together for good. She seems to be under a very deep sense of her unworthiness as a sinner."

The compassionate Mr. Jervis looked thoughtful, and said,—"'How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!' He will not break the bruised reed.—But who can this person be? surely she is one of the lambs of His flock."——

At this instant the door opened, and Mrs. Parry came in with a trembling step, leaning on Maria, and looking very pale. Mr. Jervis rose, and was evidently surprised at the sight of Mrs. Parry; but, wishing to spare her feelings, he gently took her by the hand, saying,—"I am sure we need no introduction; we are

old fellow-travellers: I remember it well. Henceforth may we be travelling in a better road towards a better country."

The Melvilles and Maria having left the room, the vicar made some enquiries of Mrs. Parry, relative to her history: after which, the following conversation took place.

"You feel," said Mr. Jervis, "doubtful of your acceptance before God?"

"O yes!" Mrs. Parry replied; "or rather, I fear it is in vain to hope I can be acceptable in his sight."

"Did you ever imagine that by pursuing some prescribed rules of conduct you could gain the favour of God?"

"I have thought so, Sir: but now the hope of *that* is gone; for I find all my endeavours are so imperfect and sinful."

"But, my friend, the Lord Jesus said, 'I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'"

"I know well that I am a sinner; yet, Sir, I have not the repentance He requires: for is it not said that 'the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit?' but my heart is not yet in such a state as to be a fit offering to present to Him."

"It is not meant that the sinner's broken heart can deserve or purchase the pardon of sin: but it is befitting that we should come to God in such a feeling of our wretchedness and vileness as is betokened by a broken and contrite spirit. They, however, who have begun to feel this, would be kept back by the sense of their unworthiness, and, therefore, He mercifully assures them He will not despise their self-condemnation. Let not this then discourage you; for He will have mercy and not sacrifice."

"Still, Sir, I can but think that if I am so justly condemned in my own apprehension, how much more so must I be in the eyes of a holy God!"

"That will not hinder your forgiveness."

"O! Sir, how can that be?"

"'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' See what he has done: 'He died for the ungodly.' He took their sins on himself, and gives them His righteousness. He offered the sacrifice and paid the penalty for them. You have, therefore, only to trust in His all-sufficient offering, and plead what He has done for guilty sinners. I pray God to

reveal this to you:—yes, I am persuaded that He will enable you to see this, that when Christ was condemned for the guilty, He stood in your place, covered and laden with your sins; and that now you are invited to come into the presence of God by faith in the Lord Jesus, and that thus being clad in the glorious righteousness of Christ, you are ‘accepted in the beloved.’ Luther has an expression, which would shew my meaning better. I think it is in a volume of his works which I saw here not long since. Here it is on this shelf. I can soon find the passage. Yes: this is the clear manner in which he states his own experience in a letter to his friend, Spenlein. After observing that ‘many are seeking to work out that which is good for a certain length of time, until they think they may come acceptably before God with their own virtues and services; which,’ he says, ‘is a thing utterly impossible;’ he adds:—‘Therefore, my dear brother, learn to know Christ and him crucified; learn to despair of yourself, and sing to him such a song as this:—Lord Jesus, thou art my righteousness, but I am thy sin. Thou hast taken to thee what

is mine, and hast given to me what is thine; thou hast taken upon thee what thou wast not, and given to me what I was not.' And as to repentance, he thus writes to Staupitz:—'That he remembered how wonderfully the word from Staupitz's mouth had once comforted him, when he said, that true repentance must spring from love to righteousness and to God: how, before that time, the word repentance had been exceedingly disagreeable to him, because it put him in mind of nothing but making satisfaction and amends to God; but, from that time, when he had learned that repentance is a change of mind—such a discovery of one's sin and misery as is indissolubly connected with a turning of the mind and soul to God, and with love to Him—then he could meet with no sweeter word in the Scriptures than this word, repentance.'

"Take encouragement then," continued Mr. Jervis; "hesitate not to cast your soul with all its guilt upon Christ: 'only believe.'——'If you have learned,' as Luther says, 'only to despair of yourself, confessing it in humility before God, then may you most safely rely on the grace

of the Lord Jesus Christ.' And fear not but He, in whose righteousness alone you must be justified, will enable you by His Spirit to serve Him in love, and will be your strength against all temptation, and your consolation in every sorrow."

Thus the good minister endeavoured to lead his trembling hearer to Christ; and, after replying to a few more questions, Mrs. Melville, her daughter, and Maria, having by this time returned to them, he closed his visit with a suitable prayer, which, like "the fastening of a nail in a sure place," was much blest to Mrs. Parry in strengthening her resolution to cast her burdens on the Lord.

CHAPTER IX.

"——My hopes and fears
Start up alarmed; and o'er life's narrow verge
Look down—on what? a fathomless abyss,
A vast eternity!"

Hervey.

MY kind reader will now, I imagine, begin to feel some curiosity to learn what may have happened to our benevolent merchant in his continental travels.

Mr. Wilson's destination was Ham-
burgh. Preferring to travel by sea, he
found a ship bound for that port, and left
the shores of England, with the hopes of
returning even earlier than he had at first
proposed. These hopes, however, were
not a little abated before the vessel had
made much progress. The voyage proved
stormy and dangerous. During one night
they were in such imminent peril, that
some of the most experienced persons on
board gave up all hope of being saved.

Mr. Wilson's mind now underwent much

distress and agitation. On the one hand, he was tortured with anxiety for his dear child, whom there seemed no probability he would ever see again; on the other, he felt considerable uneasiness in regard to his own eternal destiny. He laboured in vain to persuade himself that on *this* head he had no cause for alarm; that God was too merciful to deal with him in strict justice, without regard to the many praiseworthy features in his character. In reviewing his past life, he saw much to condemn which he had always thought inoffensive, while the most laudable of his actions now seemed unworthy of the approbation of that infinitely holy Being, before whom he must soon appear in judgment. He resolved to cast himself on the compassion and goodness of his Maker: he cried earnestly to be delivered from the jaws of death, and vowed, if his life were spared, to devote his time more fully to the duties of religion.

Resolutions formed in a crisis of danger have often vanished with the fears which called them forth. Happily, however, it was not so with Mr. Wilson. The tempest subsided; nevertheless it was some

time before he could obtain any refreshing rest. His mind continued in a very anxious state: he bethought himself of the Bible Maria had requested permission to put into one of his trunks: he searched until he discovered it in the corner of a trunk carefully wrapped up in some smooth paper: he examined the volume, and perceived it was the Bible which he had so often seen in the hands and on the bed of his ever dear deceased wife. With a shower of tears, Mr. Wilson pressed the book to his heart, and exclaimed:—"Yes! now, precious book, thou shalt be *my* companion and guide. Here and here I see the marks my dearest Helen made, where she met with those divine lessons which gave her such surprising consolation in all her sufferings. O God! give me grace that I also may learn what I must do to be saved!"

On his arrival at Hamburgh, Mr. Wilson found the accounts and papers connected with the business in the hands of a person who had been employed by his late partner as a translating clerk. For a moment, he felt disposed to doubt the wisdom of this arrangement, having but

a very slight knowledge of the person in question. His mind, however, was soon set at rest on opening a communication which his deceased friend had left for him, in his own handwriting, a short time before the approach of death deprived him of all further power to hold the pen. In this note, he spoke of that person (whose name was Danver) in terms not only of unreserved confidence, but of warm esteem; adding, that he felt moreover very deeply indebted to Mr. Danver for the instruction and comfort he received from him during his illness.

Mr. Wilson's state of mind rendered this recommendation of his clerk highly acceptable to him: even the allusion made to his piety, which but a few days before would have been passed over with indifference or have excited suspicion, now raised in his heart a wish to make this man his friend. He examined the accounts and investigated the various transactions which had been effected under Danver's management. Everything gave him unmixed satisfaction; in token of which he resolved to make the trusty clerk a present in money. It was with diffi-

culty he persuaded Danver to accept this gift. It was no trifling sum, and Danver it was well known was poor: yet he hesitated, and insisted he had done no more for his employer than what an honest servant ought to do. "Why!" said Mr. Wilson, in surprise: "what are the peculiar principles which have regulated your conduct?" Danver replied with much humility of manner,—“My principles are merely those of the Gospel, which, I suppose, Sir, you also profess. I have suffered much adversity and distress; but I must acknowledge that since I have endeavoured to live by faith in the promises of that Gospel, I have enjoyed a peace and contentedness of mind to which I was a stranger before.”

To Mr. Wilson religion did not yet appear divested of a certain idea of *dread*, with which he had hitherto associated his views of the subject: so that, though he wished for information, he paused. He recollected that the next day was the Sabbath, and said if Danver would come and dine with him, he should be glad of the opportunity of having some further conversation. The pious clerk thanked him,

and declined the invitation, alleging that he always reserved the Sabbath-day for religious duties. "But, in the evening," said Mr. Wilson—— "The evening," rejoined Danver, "I invariably devote to the religious instruction of my family, and a few of the poor neighbours that are willing to join us. All this I should not care to speak of; but, connected as I am with you, Sir, I wish for no reserve."

The merchant and his clerk now separated for the night: the latter, offering up in secret the desire of his heart that God would favour his kind employer with the richest of blessings; the former, feeling persuaded that, if he should need a guide in his endeavours to learn "what he must do to be saved," he had now met with a man who seemed well qualified to shew him the way, or at least would not deceive him or willingly lead him into error.

CHAPTER X.

"A Saint! O would that I could claim
The privileged—the happy name;
And confidently take my stand,—
The lowest of the saintly band.

* * * * *

A Saint!—O scorner, give some sign,
Some seal to prove the title mine;
And warmer thanks thou shalt command,
Than bringing kingdoms in thine hand."

MR. WILSON had promised his daughter that, during his absence, he would keep a journal of all that might occur to him, and transmit portions of it to her from time to time; and out of this interesting diary, I shall now furnish my reader with such extracts as will serve to carry on the chain of my narrative.

Maria had already received one packet from her father since his arrival in Ham-
burgh. In these communications a change in his sentiments, on religious matters, was distinctly perceptible. Nevertheless he expressed himself with caution: he felt much more than he disclosed.

At the period at which we are now arrived, Maria was at home (at Norgrove House) sitting with Mrs. Parry, whose strength seemed to be rapidly declining; while Maria sought by every kind attention to relieve her, sharing with her the superintendence of the household, and providing many comforts for her, of which she could hardly be persuaded to partake. She had been resting herself in an easy-chair, but was getting up from her seat, when Maria begged she would let her go and get what she wanted. Mrs. Parry said she had some directions to give to the housekeeper. "O! do let me go and tell her what you have to say, dear Mrs. Parry: you know we were reading this morning that passage,—‘We then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak:’ so I will run and tell her exactly as you wish," said Maria; and, having executed her commission, she was soon back again.

"O, dear Mrs. Parry," said she, as she came into the room, "I have told Smith every particular; but I am come back again very quickly, because I have got a packet from my dear father. I hope it

is good news." Mrs. Parry was glad of it, and said so: but the air of melancholy that lingered about her features, and the sigh that escaped her, while she said,—
"Thank God! I hope all is well!" shewed how difficult she still felt it to cast her own burden upon the Lord.

This was the state of things at Norgrove House at the moment the second packet arrived: and while Maria is breaking it open and hastily examining the dates, I would just remark, that one of the resolutions Mr. Wilson had formed in the hour when he was happily convinced of the necessity of seeking God with all his heart, was, that he would instantly begin and read the Bible entirely through; and the morning after he had parted from Danver—the morning of the Sabbath—found him early occupied in the prosecution of this intention. It was his first Sabbath after his arrival at Hamburgh. He hailed it with a new kind of feeling. His heart was now no stranger to a real desire to know "what God had spoken to His 'people.'" After having spent some time in private devotion and in reading in his favourite Bible, he re-

paired to one of the churches in the city; but there, excepting in some detached portions of Scripture, Mr. Wilson listened in vain for a word to instruct him in the way of salvation. He returned to his lodgings, and passed an hour in searching the Scriptures; and, taking some slight refreshment, went out again, and found his way into another of the churches, where the preacher expended his eloquence in applauding a virtuous life, while he referred to the Saviour merely as a pattern of patience!

Maria, having now arranged the contents of the packet in proper order, began to read the following particulars from

THE JOURNAL.

Monday Morning.—I rise early this morning that I may note down (while fresh in my memory and before I leave town to-day) what took place yesterday.* * * * I was sitting alone in the evening near my window, which looked towards the west and reminded me of my longed-for English home: your ever dear mother's Bible was also before me: when the servant came in and announced a visiter. I had no time to prevent the intrusion, before I heard the exclamation—"O,

Wilson, how glad I am to find you in Hamburg! How are you, and how are all friends in England?"

I instantly recognised my old companion, D'Albert, with whom I became intimate first while he was going through a course of education in England, and whom I have since met in my journeys on the Continent. You have heard me speak of him.

"O yes," observed Maria; "this is the foreigner, Mrs. Parry, who, my father used to say, united in his character the vivacity of the Frenchman, and the sober-mindedness of the German, with the penetration of the Englishman."

Maria proceeded with the journal:—

—After exchanging a few mutual enquiries, he said, "But how serious you look, Wilson."

I replied, that I had some *serious* matters to think about while I reflected on the past and formed resolves for the future.

D'Albert looked surprised, and said,— "Why, how now! I should have thought that by this time you had acquired a fortune quite sufficient to enable you to give up commerce, and sit down at your ease."

"Ah! D'Albert," I answered, "it is not *earthly* gain that I am thinking about."

I was proceeding to tell him how my mind had been called to the consideration of an *eternal* portion, when he exclaimed, pointing at the Bible, which lay open on the table, "Ah! I see the cause of all this! Why, you bid fair to become a preacher, a saint!"

"Alas!" I rejoined, "you give me credit for more than I deserve. I have no intention of aspiring to be a preacher, and as to being a saint, I fear I have no claims to such an honourable appellation. But seriously, my friend, I am resolved to become a real Christian, if I can."

"Well," said D'Albert, "I wish you success. For my part, I was brought up, you know, in the religion of my parents, who were Papists; but I am convinced it is all priestcraft and mummery. I have renounced it, therefore, to the utter dismay of my father's old confessor. And as to any other kind of religion, I have lately read a clever work, which induces me to conclude that the less we trouble ourselves about such matters the better."

I now perceived to my grief that my poor friend D'Albert had got his mind poisoned with infidel opinions, and, having my hand upon the Bible, I was about making him a reply, when he seemed anxious to turn the subject, and urged me to lend him my aid in an affair of importance.

I begged him to forbear the mention of any

worldly matters then ; as, whatever he might think, I was resolved that religious duties only should occupy my attention on the Sabbath. But he said, the business so nearly concerned the peace of mind of a friend of his, then on the verge of the grave, that he was persuaded I should excuse his troubling me with it *then*, and readily exert myself to obtain the relief he sought. " For," he added, " religion must have strangely altered your heart, Wilson, if you can listen to a tale of distress without a feeling of compassion."

This appeal at once overcame my scruples. I rang the bell, and ordered some coffee, and then desired D'Albert to relate the occasion of his friend's unhappiness without further preface.

CHAPTER XI.

"O moments past! what are ye now
But thorns about my aching brow!
Spectres, that hover round my brain,
And aggravate and mock my pain!"

H. K. White.

D'ALBERT thus began— "Ten days since I received a message from an old associate of mine, —in fact, an old family connexion, entreating me to go to him immediately. His residence is near Luneburgh, that is, a day's journey from this place. But I was then at Copenhagen. With the utmost dispatch, I reached him on the third day, and found him dangerously ill. My arrival affected him deeply. After taking a reviving cordial and ordering his attendants to withdraw, he addressed me to this effect:—

" 'D'Albert, I have a heavy burden on my mind: it oppresses me day and night, and makes the prospect of approaching death intolerable. I have sent for you, my friend, because I know no one whom I can so assuredly rely on to fulfil my dying request.'

" 'What is it?' I asked, eagerly.

“ ‘Listen!’ said de Villier. ‘During the French Revolution, (I mean that which took place in 1789,) my father was obliged to fly for his life. He took the precaution of conveying his family, consisting of my mother, myself, and my two sisters, to the frontiers, ready to be forwarded to England. It was necessary, however, that my father himself should return to his house to settle some affairs as hastily and secretly as he could. But when within a few leagues from home, he was met by his old and faithful servant, Pierre, who told him his effects were all seized and his person proscribed. The good old domestic then found an unfrequented path which led them to the mansion of my father’s friend, M. Verdan. There they passed the night, and my father was greatly refreshed by the kind attention he received under that roof.

“ ‘M. Verdan, having learned from my father how straitened his resources had become by the confiscation of his property, insisted on his taking with him as much ready cash as he could furnish him with. It was a large sum: and it was merely stipulated that, if ever my father should have it in his power, he should repay it to M. Verdan or to his surviving family. In the dead of the following night, this generous friend led my father through by-roads towards the place where he had left us. The morning was now far advanced, and every hour exposed my father to

greater danger. The necessity therefore of separating from M. Verdan increased every step. They embraced each other affectionately, and parted. It was the last moment they saw each other in this world. My father's old servant, Pierre, had accompanied them. It was very hard for him to part finally with his beloved master. My father told us no arguments could prevail with Pierre to leave him, but M. Verdan's protesting that Pierre's person was so well known, that if my father were seen with him, it would inevitably lead to his detection.

“ ‘But our time will not allow me to dwell on these circumstances: yet I feel a melancholy relief in recounting the hazardous services my father received from these faithful friends in the hour of his peril. Suffice it to mention, that M. Verdan insisted on old Pierre's returning with *him*, and spending the remnant of his days in his family.

“ ‘My father succeeded in conveying my mother and all of us safe to England, and immediately began to devise some means of supporting his family. In the mean time, while passing along a street in London, he met an emigrant, who had just escaped from France. They recognised each other: but this gentleman told my father, to his great grief, that the revolutionists had murdered the good M. Verdan and several members of his household; but no one could tell whither the survivors had fled.

“ ‘My father had a knowledge of trade, and got employment in a mercantile house. After a few years his services were so well appreciated by the partners, that they agreed to allow him a share in the profits; and by industrious and careful habits, both in himself and in my mother, he became eventually the possessor of a good property.

“ ‘After his death, I found in his will, an ample provision was made to remunerate, with interest, M. Verdan’s surviving representative. There was also a memorandum, stating that he had never ceased to make enquiries, through every possible channel, but without success, for such of that family as might still be living; and charging me to continue the search, until I could find and reimburse the rightful heir.’

“ Poor de Villier now felt exhausted, and rested a while to recover his breath. He began again, by telling me that he blamed himself for not having used more diligence in this research: that his hopes, however, revived one day, when he learned by accident that some French spies had been in that neighbourhood in pursuit of the eldest son. ‘Hearing of this circumstance,’ said he, ‘I came to this place, ostensibly as a resident, but really for the purpose of using it as a convenient centre, whence I could make excursions in continuance of my search in the surrounding towns. Now, D’Albert,’ he added, with a look that I can never

forget, 'it will diffuse a soothing calm over my last few days, if you will solemnly promise me to use every means for the discovery of the younger Verdan, and see that the money left him in my will is faithfully paid him.'

"Poor de Villier! I assured him I would readily undertake the business, and spare neither pains nor expence in the pursuit; and tenderly grasping his emaciated hand, I hastily left the place. But, O Wilson! I fear it is a hopeless case. I have already searched Hamburgh through; and Lawenburg, and Lubec; but in vain. And I am now going off to Bremen in pursuit of the fugitive there. But I fear to no purpose; for I imagine that if M. Verdan really be in any one of these places, and happen to hear his name mentioned or his person enquired after, he immediately suspects some spies are hunting him, and conceals himself still more closely. Wilson, can you give me any clue or any advice?"

"Why, D'Albert," said I, "don't you think it likely that M. Verdan has taken another name?"

"It is said that he did," said D'Albert; "and there lies the difficulty; for no one can tell what name he now goes by."

I instantly thought of Danver, and secretly prayed that he might prove to be the person in question. I then asked D'Albert if M. de Villier could give him any description of the younger Verdan's person? D'Albert replied, that the elder

M. de Villier had left a memorandum of his having heard that M. Verdan's son had married in England, and had taken his family into the Netherlands, where his wife died leaving him two little children; and that he was described as rather tall, of a slender form, with a fair complexion, and somewhat bald: and, moreover, that he was well skilled in several of the continental languages.

"I think," said I, "I know the very man." D'Albert, at this, started up, exclaiming,—“O! tell me where I can find him.”—“Stay,” said I; “the person I mean is one whom you would in derision call ‘a preacher,—a saint!’ he is so strictly devout, that he would be sadly annoyed by any intrusion of this nature on the Sabbath.”

D'Albert looked at his watch, and observed it was past six o'clock: but I told him my friend did not cut the sacred day short, like those who loved the world better than they loved God; and that I knew moreover he would be very particularly engaged in the evening in giving religious instruction.

“Religious instruction!” cried D'Albert.—“I'll tell you what,” said I; “when I was in the city to-day, I found out where he lives, intending to go this evening and hear his exposition. You can at least *see* him, therefore, if you will accompany me. But we will get into the room, unobserved by him if possible, lest we should disturb

his quiet method of teaching the children and the few poor persons that venture to assemble in his house. I met by accident this morning with one of the older persons, who always attends, and who assured me he explains things to them in a delightful manner; so familiar and so kind."

"Why, Wilson," rejoined D'Albert, "how strange is this! is it becoming your station in life, to go and sit down as a listener to the ravings of an enthusiast among a lot of poor children?"

"Alas!" I replied, "when people have everything to learn, it is needful to begin at the lowest form. When you came in, I was reading where our Saviour says,—'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.' I am determined, therefore, to be a listener among the lowest to-night: afterwards I can judge whether it would be proper to go again. So, my friend, let me hear no more scruples; but come with me, and I shall be disappointed if you are not well repaid for your trouble in more respects than one."

CHAPTER XII.

" When, at mercy's footstool bending,
Thou hast felt a sacred glow;
Faith and hope to heaven ascending,
Love still lingering below;
Say—has ne'er the thought impressed thee,
That thy friend might feel thy prayer?
Or the wish at least possessed thee,
He could then thy feeling share?"

Conder.

WE soon arrived at Danver's residence. It was in the suburbs, hard by dwellings of the poor. I knocked gently at the door, which was opened by a neat elderly woman, whose dress and appearance would remind you of what you have often seen and admired in England. I inadvertently spoke to her in English, which raised a smile of pleasure in her fine open countenance.

To my enquiry, she replied in a respectful manner that her master was engaged, and could not be interrupted. I told her I was aware of that, and wished to hear him converse with the poor people. The good old housekeeper (whose name was Susan) had brought us into a small wainscoted room, and followed us with two old

chairs much impaired by hard use. There was no other furniture in the room. Susan added, in a whisper,—“My master had once better accommodations; but God’s will is best. Please to be seated, gentlemen, and as soon as he is at liberty I will let you know.”

I could perceive by poor D’Albert’s looks, that he was ill prepared to stay patiently in so comfortless an apartment, anxious too as he was to obtain a sight of Danver’s person. I therefore softly followed old Susan out of the room, and repeated my wish to hear her master’s lecture. But I found I could not prevail, until I told her who I was, and how M. Danver was connected with me. She then requested me to return to the boarded apartment, and promised to come again at a moment when we could get to a back seat in the lecture-room without being seen.

On my return to D’Albert, I found him listening to the voice of a person, evidently in an adjoining room. We could distinguish nearly every sentence. It was Danver offering up prayer. Little as I had ever considered the subject of prayer, the beautiful simplicity of his language and his fervour of expression struck me very forcibly. Like a child addressing his father, he implored mercy for himself and his little company of fellow-worshippers in the name of Jesus. I whispered to D’Albert,—“How unlike the mummery of the popish prayers! this is pray-

ing!’ D’Albert returned a look of acknowledgment.

The prayer ended, old Susan quietly opened the door, and beckoned. We followed her through a short passage which opened into a room nearly filled with persons who were in the act of rising from their knees and resuming their seats. We took advantage of the momentary disorder to get unobserved to a seat behind the rest. I perceived my companion was eager to catch a glimpse of the lecturer. I held him down to his seat, while he exclaimed, in a whisper,—“It must be the man; he is so like the description! Do let me just put the question to him.”—“O, D’Albert!” I whispered, “be patient: remember your promise not to interrupt: let us both try to learn what we are lamentably ignorant of.” We now sat and listened.

Danver had on the previous Sabbath given the children and some other persons present a subject to consider during the week, and they were to bring passages of Scripture to illustrate their thoughts upon it. The subject for this evening was “true peace.” Danver called upon one after another to produce their Scriptures. I was surprised at the readiness with which some of the youngest of the children turned to the most appropriate texts I ever heard. As often as a fresh one was read, Danver would make suitable remarks. I regret that I can recollect so little of what he

said. This, however, I remember well: an aged disciple had read for his text, (I think these were the words exactly,) "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." On which Danver observed,— "I remember once meeting with this remark in an English book,— 'There is something like peace, which the world gives; but it begins in sin, and ends in sorrow: ' so that you see," continued Danver, "there is in reality no peace to the wicked. But (turning to one of the children) let us hear you repeat those words of our Lord which you read." The child then repeated that beautiful passage which I now transcribe from my Bible:— "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." (John xiv. 27.) Then speaking to a person of venerable looks, Danver asked, "What makes this peace, which our Lord gives, different from what the world gives?" The answer was, "No afflictions can deprive us of it."—"True," said Danver: and then turning to another, received this answer,— "It was purchased by the blood of Christ."—"If," said Danver, "you were to give a priest a sum of money, could he buy this peace for you? What say you, my friends?" Several voices answered,— "No: we could not buy it from our priests."—"What then is this peace?" he asked. "Peace with God."—"Peace in the conscience."—"And among ourselves."—"Quiet submission to the will of God."—were

some of the replies. "How is it received?"—"By faith."—"By believing in Jesus."—"By looking to Christ in faith."—"Repeat the Scripture you read."—"Being justified by faith we have peace with *God*, through our *Lord Jesus Christ*."—"What comfort is there in believing?"—"There is joy and peace in believing." (Rom. xv. 13.)

In this way questions were put, and answers returned, which served, at least, to convince me that hitherto I had been a stranger to real happiness, and to give me quite a different notion of faith to anything I had ever before thought of. I could not help whispering to my companion, "O, D'Albert! what a happy man a real Christian must be!" He made me no reply. At the conclusion of the service, a hymn was sung, and Danver prayed, dwelling on the legacy of peace our Lord had bequeathed his people, and pleading the fulfilment of the grant to all that were present and to all that in every place were seeking salvation in Him. I could hardly forbear repeating aloud, *Amen*; but the whisper of my heart, I trust, was heard.

Thus far Maria had proceeded in the journal, when she recollected that it was time for her invalid companion to take some medicine.

"My dear Miss Wilson," said the widow, "I had not forgotten it; but I was unwilling to put a stop to your reading so interesting an account."

"I am glad, my dear Mrs. Parry," said Maria, "that you think it interesting: it is indeed so to *me*."

"And I cannot help thinking," Mrs. Parry observed, "how remarkable it was that M. D'Albert should find out your papa and call upon him that evening, just as he was going to M. Danver's meeting. Surely the misguided gentleman heard there enough to convince him, that although his old religion, popery, was a bad one, yet that there is one religion that is true. And I wonder if M. Danver proved to be the person he was seeking!"

"I hope," said Maria, "we shall find that out before this portion of the journal closes."

"Pray, Miss Wilson," rejoined Mrs. Parry, "do proceed: at least let me be indulged with hearing as much of it as you may judge proper for me to be acquainted with."

CHAPTER XIII.

"Oft as amid the snares I tread,
By deadly hate and fraud outspread,
What fears my anxious bosom prove!
Yet am I saved by changeless love."

MARIA gladly resumed her dear father's narrative.

The little congregation having now departed one by one, most of them with some expression of grateful and affectionate respect towards Danver, he only was left, with two sweet children, who I concluded were his. We now came forward, and discovered ourselves. I desired him not to be disconcerted at seeing us. "I hope," I said, "that I and my companion have derived much benefit from what we have heard, and that we shall ever retain a pleasing remembrance of the privilege we have enjoyed this evening."

Before I had finished this observation, the good man's placid countenance began to shew some signs that it was irksome to him to be addressed in that kind of strain: I therefore hastily

added, "But there is a matter of immediate urgency which my friend here is anxious to converse with you about. I have undertaken to request you will answer a few questions, which he wishes to put to you."

The colour instantly rose in Danver's face, while he cast a somewhat suspecting look at D'Albert. "Danver," I said, "be quite at ease. Be assured that no consideration could induce me to betray you."

"Sir," replied Danver, "I know you well enough to feel quite safe in *your* hands; but——" looking again at D'Albert——

"As to M. D'Albert," I rejoined, "he is an old friend of mine: he is pledged to me to maintain inviolable secrecy, and I have perfect confidence in his honour." Danver now desired the children to leave the room. I caught a sweet smile and a shake of the hand from each of them as they passed me.

D'Albert then begged Danver to tell him what his father's real name was?

He replied, "My father's name was Louis Verdan."

"Is he living?"

"He is not living."

"His residence? was it on his own estate, near St. Omer?"

"It was."

"Who became heir to his property?"

"Alas! my poor father was stripped of all his possessions by the republican party, and cast into prison, where he died. My lamented mother also died soon after. In short, I am the only member of the family now living: and if it were really an act of justice to take my life also, I would willingly surrender it. But, Oh! my own dear motherless children!—though I think I know one (he added, looking at me through a flood of tears) who, in God's kind providence, would be their friend."

I entreated Danver to dismiss these apprehensions from his mind, and to rest assured that nothing should be divulged without his own consent.

D'Albert then renewed his interrogations. "Do you remember whether your father had a friend whom he assisted in making his escape to England?"

"Yes; I saw him on the night of his taking refuge in my father's house, with Pierre. His name was De Villier."

"Did you ever hear your father speak of a sum of money that he lent to that unfortunate gentleman?"

"No: he never referred to it."

"But had you, Sir, any knowledge of the circumstance?"

"I was present when the money was wrapped up and placed in M. de Villier's hand, who took it reluctantly."

"Did he give M. Verdan any written promise of repayment?"

"I found a note to that effect among my father's papers, stipulating payment only in the event of his ever having it in his power."

"Can you favour me with a sight of that note, Sir?"

"I can," replied Danver, and went out of the room.

While he was absent, I asked D'Albert what he thought of him. "He is one of the most interesting characters," he answered, "that I ever met with."

"Such polished prepossessing manners," said I, "with the meekness and self-denial of the Christian."

"Certainly," said D'Albert, "I never saw religion thus accompanied until now. And it was remarkable that I should hear of your being in Hamburgh, and that I should mention the object of my search to you just after you had become acquainted with him."

"My friend," I rejoined, "these are the dealings of that Power which the infidel in his folly overlooks."

"I must confess, Wilson," said he, "it is a *wilful* oversight."

Danver now returned, and presented the note to D'Albert, who thanked him, and said it was little needed, since there could be no doubt he

was the very person whom he had been charged by the entreaties of a dying friend to discover. "Happily," continued he, "Mr. Wilson persuaded me much against my will to accompany him hither this evening, and thus brought my well-nigh hopeless search to a successful issue. But I perceive, M. Verdan, I am still keeping you in suspense. Let me, therefore, hasten to tell you, it is Rolan de Villier, the son of your father's friend, who, in his last hours, thus anxiously wishes to restore the money so generously and so seasonably lent. It will be seen in his will that he has provided for its repayment by bequeathing you double the amount. Nay," proceeded D'Albert, observing that Danver was about to offer some objection, "pray do not scruple to accept the bequest. You know not how keenly our dying friend would feel your opposition to his wishes on this head. And do not think, my dear Sir, that this act of justice to you interferes with other claims; for the property accumulated by the exertions of the elder de Villier, still increased under the son's industry, who, besides various donations to the Church, and sundry charities, has left ample legacies to all his relatives."

D'Albert now proposed that Verdan (as I shall henceforth call him) should go with him to the place where he left de Villier on the verge of death. "Nothing," said he, "will give him

greater comfort in his last moments than the sight of *you*. I only hope we may find the poor fellow yet alive, and in his senses; for those myrmidons, the priests, are so assiduously teasing him with their tiresome superstitions, that I wonder he can keep in his right mind. And (turning to me) I hope, my friend, as you have not been merely an unaffected witness to this happy disclosure, you will feel no objection to oblige us with your company."

"D'Albert," I replied, "I feel so interested in the whole affair, that, if you had not kindly made the offer, I could not have refrained from inviting myself." We then agreed to meet at my lodgings at an early hour the next morning, and separated for the night.

Maria now paused, and, running her eye over a few remaining lines, perceived there were no further particulars relating to de Villier. She sighed as she folded the papers together, and said,—“I hope I have not wearied you, Mrs. Parry?”

“O! no; my dear Miss Wilson; I am only sorry you have no more to read.”

“I must check my impatience,” resumed Maria; “but I shall long for the next packet, for I suppose it will inform us

whether they found poor M. de Villier alive. But what a remarkable character M. Verdan is. Papa seems very fond of him; and even M. D'Albert, though *he* is not a Christian, appears to regard him as a very extraordinary man."

"Not a Christian! how unaccountable! Notwithstanding his long acquaintance with so good a man as your father, that he should be still 'not a Christian!'"

"I should think," said Maria, "he never was really a Christian: for I remember hearing my father remark, that, after M. D'Albert left England, he spent a great deal of his time in the society of some of the most eminent Literati in France and Germany, who were avowedly inimical to Christianity. But, you know, that is not to be wondered at; for, as Mr. Jervis observed in the beautiful sermon he preached from those words—'We preach Christ crucified; unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.'—The most learned men are as incapable of seeing the truth of the Gospel, and their

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**need of Christ, as poor ignorant children,
until they are enlightened by the Spirit
of God."**

CHAPTER XIV.

"Cheering words—we meet again!
Love's own language, comfort darting
Through the souls of friends at parting;
In heaven, we meet again!"

Montgomery.

ABOUT this time, Maria's aunt, Mrs. Pearson, came to spend a few days at Norgrove House. She knew that her niece was fondly attached to Mrs. Parry, and that she was so constantly with her that her health was suffering from the confinement. She therefore brought with her one of her children, a fine lively girl of six years, and proposed that, during their stay, Maria should make little Laura her companion, and go out with her every day; while she would herself gladly spend the chief of the time with Mrs. Parry.

Maria felt the kindness of her aunt's intention, and dropped a tear on her little cousin's cheek as she stooped down to kiss her.

"But where is Mrs. Parry? and how is she?" enquired Mrs. Pearson, adding,—
 "You are looking pale and thin yourself, my dear Maria."

"I fear," answered Maria, "you will think poor Mrs. Parry much altered; and I am thankful you are come, my dear aunt, because, when you write to papa, you can tell him what you think of her."

Mrs. Pearson was indeed struck with the alteration in Mrs. Parry's looks, and wrote to her brother before she left Norgrove House, confirming Maria's worst fears.

On making reference to her niece, she remarked——

"It will rejoice your heart, my dear brother, to hear that your darling girl is growing up the image of her dear mother. I never saw a young person of her age so considerate and attentive to the wishes of others; so free from frivolity, so pious, and so well informed, and yet so devoid of affectation. When we first arrived she looked thin and out of spirits; but her looks have already improved. Her little favourite, Laura, whom she takes out every day, has diverted her thoughts a good deal. But I am not surprised that Maria should feel anxious about Mrs. Parry, who, though

she can still do a little in the discharge of her duty, is, however, gradually losing her strength. But she is a very sensible person, and is very patient and thankful for the slightest mark of kindness. When I leave, I will caution my niece not to sit very much at a time in the same apartment with her. This, I am aware, will call for no little of Maria's self-denial; for she is very fond of her."——

In another letter Mrs. Pearson makes these observations in alluding to Mrs. Parry:—

“But I ought not to conceal from you, my dear Frank, that I came hither with a vain conceit that I was coming to *teach* others; but I little thought I was coming to *learn* myself. I had certainly made religion to consist chiefly in holding certain doctrines. I lamented the unscriptural sermons we hear at Leybourn, while I took no pains in the cultivation of my own heart. A few simple remarks, which have fallen from one whom I am not ashamed to call ‘my dear friend,’ have convinced me that I am in a dead profitless state. The knowledge Mrs. Parry has gained in the Scriptures, and her aptness in recollecting passages suitable for every occasion, would surprise you. But then, I have discovered that all

this is the result, under the divine blessing, of a regular stated plan of Scripture-reading, never omitted, and always accompanied with prayer. I usually take her with me in the carriage when the evenings are dry. I shall never forget these pleasant drives, and the happy hours we have thus spent together. The other evening we were conversing about a sermon we had read on 'the Spirit's work in the heart.' Mrs. Parry said a few words, and added,—'The soul of the diligent shall be made fat.' The sentence was spoken in her own quiet humble manner; but it made me resolve that from that time I would never pass a day, the Lord permitting, without spending a stated time in searching the Scriptures and in communion with God. That same evening, your dear Maria went with Laura to see the charity-school at E——, (wishing to know how to organize one at N——,) and as they returned they called at old Betty Ken's. When they came home, the child said to Mrs. Parry, 'Do you know, Mrs. Parry, poor Betty has no rest all night; she is in such pain. Do you think, if God loved her, she would have so much pain?'—'My dear,' said Mrs. Parry, 'whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth. When your finger was cut, who dressed the wound?'—'My mamma.'—'And did you not cry while she was dressing it?'—'Yes; because it made it smart so.'—'And do you not think your mamma loved you all the while she made it

smart?"—"Yes, I am sure she did; but she wanted to make my finger well again."—"So, my dear sweet child, God loves poor Betty, and makes her have all this pain because He loves her." Maria remarked, that since Betty had been so heavily afflicted her temper was greatly improved. Mrs. Parry said to her, almost in a whisper,—"Tribulation worketh patience." This word, though hardly audible, made a deep impression on my mind. It came to me with an indescribable power and sweetness. And thus, my dear brother, I find myself a learner. I have always shunned the cross: now I shall try to welcome it as a token of love, and as a means of grace." * * * *

Many tears were shed when Mrs. Pearson took her departure from Norgrove House. The two friends commended each other to the Great Shepherd's keeping. Maria shared in their griefs and prayers.

In the afternoon the postman brought a packet of letters from Hamburgh: and in the inclosure was found a continuation of Mr. Wilson's diary. It was a calm, serene evening: the air was mild and inviting. Maria, therefore, proposed taking tea in her favourite seat in the shrubbery, and spending the interval in reading her father's communications. Mrs. Parry

willingly acquiesced in the proposal, but cautioned Maria not to read any parts which it might seem improper for her to hear.

"What a delightful retreat this is!" said Mrs. Parry, as she slowly turned under a sweet-scented thorn. "But how long have you had an easy-chair in it?"—"Ever since you said you should like to pass the evening here," said Maria, playfully. "Ah! my dear Miss Wilson," cried Mrs. Parry, "this is quite needless. Indeed, your kindness must be restrained."—"Come, come, my dear Mrs. Parry," rejoined Maria, "sit you down, and let us see what we can find in papa's narrative." She then began the continuation of

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Monday Night.—The morning breeze was cool and refreshing. I threw my cloak around me, and, as I stepped out at the door, saw D'Albert's carriage approaching. Verdan instantly joined us. The postillion was desired to proceed on the road to Luneburg with all possible expedition. "I am in hopes," observed D'Albert, "we shall find de Villier living, and capable of identifying M. Verdan. His physician said, he might per-

haps linger for some weeks, or, as he expressed it, the vital spark might possibly vanish before the following morning. I must confess I am extremely anxious to see him again. I am anxious too to see how far he is benefited in his last hours by his religious tenets."—"Is he not of the Romish faith?" said Verdan.—"He is so," replied D'Albert, while his dark eye was fixed on our companion with an expression of veneration and astonishment.—"Sir," he added, "what I heard in your house last night convinces me that the Roman religion is one of the most dangerous systems in the world. But I think, to give it a fair trial, we ought to see what support it can render in a dying hour." In answer to this remark, Verdan said to this effect:—that at such a crisis it was not easy to form a right judgment; since the whole scheme of that religion was calculated to produce a blind reliance on the official services of the priest, and thus to lull the conscience with a false peace. An interesting discussion followed, in the course of which, D'Albert told us, that, having renounced the Roman Catholic religion, he had taken pains to acquaint himself with the tenets of the various churches on the Continent; but had not yet succeeded in meeting with a creed that quite suited his mind. While the argument continued, I could but observe a remarkable difference in my two friends. The impetuosity of D'Albert's temper was every

now and then threatening to break out; while his opponent met all his hasty assertions with an affectionate kind of forbearance, and a cautiousness of manner; as though he felt deeply, but forbore to shew the pity and concern he had in his heart for his erring brother. With a tender dignified earnestness, Verdan at length ventured to press upon him the necessity of searching the Scriptures with prayer for divine help, if he really wished to know the truth.

We were now arrived at a turn in the road which disclosed a most beautiful prospect of the Elbe, and the country on both sides of the river. Neither of us could withhold the admiration this charming view excited in our minds. At first, I regretted the interruption it occasioned: perhaps, however, it was as well: poor D'Albert had probably heard as much by this time as he could well bear.

CHAPTER XV.

"For what shall heal, when holy water banes?
 Or who may guide
 O'er desert plains
 Thy loved yet sinful people wandering wide,
 If Aaron's hand unshrinking mould
 An idol-form of earthly gold?"

Keble.

As soon as we arrived at Luneburg, we hastened to the house in which M. de Villier lodged. D'Albert's eager enquiry at the door, was met by an intimation that the poor gentleman was still alive; but could not be seen at that hour, as the priest was with him, and had given strict orders that no one should be suffered to enter the apartment. This was a disappointment that D'Albert could not easily put up with; and being fearful that, if he were provoked, his vexation might excite alarm, and occasion further difficulties, I suggested, that if we could be admitted into the antechamber, we would remain there quietly until the holy father had quite finished his prayers. I accompanied this request with some pieces of silver which I slipped into the servant's hand,

whose face instantly assumed a friendly aspect; and in a few seconds we found ourselves conducted in silence into a room adjoining the sick-chamber. The priest was not aware of our admission: he was at the moment talking to the dying man in a loud angry tone. The door was on the jar, so that we could distinctly hear the conversation that passed.

De Villier, (in a tremulous voice.) I had indulged the hope, reverend father, that, after having made ample bequests to the Church, and dealt conscientiously with all other claimants, I could die in peace.

Priest. There can be no peace for your soul, if you depart in this disobedient state of mind.

De Villier. Alas! what more can I do?

Priest. Sir, you must not dispute the authority of our holy mother, the Church. I have a right to direct you in the disposal of your property. Of your other bequests I approve; but you have a large sum, for which you say you cannot find a rightful owner. The name of this unknown person you pertinaciously refuse to divulge; but you say you have left the money, in trust, to one D'Albert. Now, Sir, the proper trustee in such a case would be the Church. What I require, therefore, is this:—strike M. D'Albert's name out of the will, and substitute——

De Villier, (interrupting energetically.) To that I will never assent!

Priest, (soothingly.) Hear me, my son. It may be done conditionally: if the unnamed person be not produced within a certain period, then let M. D'Albert be required to transfer the money to the Church, or to some ecclesiastic, (to me if you will,) for charitable purposes.

At this, D'Albert's patience could hold no longer. He rushed into the room: we followed him. The priest was startled, and demanded who he was? D'Albert exclaimed, "I am M. de Villier's friend, and the enemy of priestcraft." The ecclesiastic, in a rage, was about to expostulate: "But," said D'Albert, "if your reverence doubts whether I am authorized to take charge of his affairs, his own lips shall tell you." A faint, but pleasurable smile, which had already enlivened poor de Villier's pale countenance, bore sufficient testimony to the truth, while his friend thus further addressed the priest:—"And now, Sir, I insist upon your instantly leaving this house; and if ever you venture again into this room, while my poor friend is living, you shall have reason to bewail your temerity. Make haste, or I will send you headlong into the street: and be thankful if I do not expose you in a public court for a dishonourable and fraudulent attempt to extort money from this helpless victim of your snares!"

The priest hardly stayed for the conclusion of the sentence. Verdan and I followed him quickly, and saw him pass out at the street

door, which we shut and made fast; and thinking M. de Villier would need some restorative after having passed through a scene of so much excitement, we sent the nurse up to the sick-chamber, where we had left D'Albert embracing and congratulating his friend. A servant shewed Verdan and myself into the library, a small apartment neatly furnished. "I think," said I to Verdan, "poor M. de Villier knew who you were when we entered the room; for, in the midst of the confusion, I perceived his languid eye was instantly lighted up and fixed on you with a very peculiar expression." We now conversed a while on the wonderful dealings of Providence, in bringing about the circumstances in which we were now called to bear a part, when Verdan observed, that those circumstances were of such a nature as to require an unusual degree of firmness and discretion; since it was evidently his duty to make an effort to convince de Villier of the errors of his faith. "I think," said he, "we should do well, therefore, to seek direction and help from our heavenly Father. You will have no objection, my dear Sir, to join in offering up a few petitions." I readily assented, and we knelt down, while Verdan gave utterance to his pious feelings in one of the sweetest prayers I ever heard. He prayed very fervently for de Villier, that he might be led to see his lost condition as a sinner, and to seek Christ alone for

his Saviour. On his own behalf, he prayed that the Lord's purpose in bringing him to that house might be blessed to the salvation of his dying friend. He prayed for D'Albert too: but O! I shall never forget what I felt while he sought mercy for *me*: it was so particularly suited to my wants and desires, that it seemed as though he were at that moment reading my inmost soul.

Here the progress of the journal was intercepted by a flood of tears, which Maria could repress no longer. Just at this instant, however, the tea-things were brought. She, therefore, silently laid aside the manuscript, and busied herself at the tea-table. After a short space, Mrs. Parry began to speak of M. Verdan, and observed, it was a pity he was not a clergyman; as his talents seemed eminently suited to the pastor's office. This led to some pleasant and profitable conversation, which lasted till tea was over; when Maria again took up the journal. There were, however, several paragraphs which she could not trust herself to read aloud. These we must omit, and resume our extracts at a subsequent period.

CHAPTER XVI.

“ Could my tears for ever flow,
 Could my zeal no respite know,
 All for sin could not atone;
 Thou must save, and Thou alone:
 In my hand no price I bring,
 Simply to thy cross I cling.
 Rock of ages, cleft for me!
 Let me hide myself in Thee!”

Toplady.

M. VERDAN had now been introduced to M. de Villier, whose delight while he pressed him to his palpitating heart was almost too much for him to sustain.

After the money-transaction was settled, Verdan, seated at the bedside, had drawn the conversation towards religious subjects, and had begun to reason with de Villier on his guilty and lost condition as a sinner. He had also gone far to convince him of the futility and sinfulness of every attempt to remove the sinner's guilt by any other sacrifice, but that of Christ alone. At this point the journal proceeded thus:—

It was a most touching scene. Poor de Villier, emaciated and pale, saving a slight flush on his cheekbone, with his fine dark eyes gazing intently on Verdan, who had pulled a Testament from his pocket, and was alleging some appropriate Scriptures in proof of his argument, pressing his point with a gentleness, earnestness, and concern that I cannot describe.

De Villier sighed, and said, "Alas! how have I been deceived! Oh! what can I do? is it not too late to seek the right way?"—" 'I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain;' is the Lord's gracious word," rejoined Verdan.

"But I am so unworthy," sighed de Villier—"Even if I could call upon Him, surely he would not hear: my sins are so great!"

Verdan now began to open to his dying friend the rich treasures of the Gospel. In short, he preached—for it would have made an admirable sermon—and God made it a great blessing; for my friend, D'Albert, seemed quite riveted to the spot, and the nurse, who stood behind Verdan, was shedding tears, while, as I said, he was preaching "Christ" and only "Christ crucified" for the lost and guilty.

De Villier survived that night and the following. Verdan was continually with him, reading, praying, and conversing on the chief concern: indeed de Villier seemed unwilling to attend to any other subject. He became so attached to

Verdan, that he received even his little portion of food and medicine from no other hand with such apparent satisfaction as from his, and on awaking from his short slumbers, he would look round with an anxious eye, if he were not in sight. He shewed a very grateful feeling towards D'Albert, and said, with tears,—“How thankful am I to you and Mr. Wilson for bringing this blessed servant of God to me: if you had not found him and brought him to me, I myself must have been lost! I should have died without knowing the only Saviour of lost souls,—Jesus Christ. Once I was lost; but now I am found! I *was* blind; but now I see! D'Albert, I leave all my affairs in your hands. I have no further care for the things of this world. But hear my dying testimony: merely to renounce Rome will not give you peace. There is but one right way, and to that I was an utter stranger, until God in his mercy sent me this dear friend. Dear D'Albert, search the Bible for yourself. The Lord guide you into the way. The Lord bless and keep you!”

The last evening he passed in the body, he ordered his servant to place on the table the few devotional books he had been using under the direction of the Romish priest, and after examining them had them all burned one by one before his eyes. Verdan spent the whole of the last night with him. He says he was very restless all night, and suffered occasionally extreme pain;

but that he bore it all with wonderful patience. As his end drew near, he became greatly animated. He had been lying a considerable time in a quiet posture, with his hands held in the attitude of prayer. A sweet smile now beamed on his countenance, while his eyes were directed upwards with inexpressible delight. "He then took hold of my hand," says Verdan, "and seemed to be sinking again into a slumber; but in a few moments he looked at me, and exclaimed—'None but Christ! none but Christ!' and breathed no more."

When Maria arrived at this period, she paused. Mrs. Parry was deeply affected with what she had heard: she was a little wearied too, and as it began to feel rather damp, they retired to the house, and spent the remainder of the evening in conversing on the happy change that had taken place in de Villier.

The journal disclosed nothing further, excepting that, after the gentleman's death, Mr. Wilson returned to Hamburgh, leaving Verdan with D'Albert, who wished him to stay and follow the remains of their deceased friend to the grave. "But, D'Albert," said Mr. Wilson, "pray, take every precaution not to expose Danver's

person to observation, especially on returning with him to Hamburgh; for I find the murderous edict is yet in force; the malice of his enemies has not yet subsided. I leave him, however, under your protection with perfect confidence; for I know you would defend his life, if assailed, at the hazard of your own."

Very soon after his return to Hamburgh, Mr. Wilson wrote to his daughter to inform her that he hoped in a few days he should once more be on the road to the port where he intended to embark for England. This letter he thought would be the last he should have an opportunity of sending before his return; adding, that he longed for the happy hour when he could once more embrace his dear child. He told her also that he wished to bring over with him Verdan's little children and their old servant; and, after specifying two contiguous rooms to be got ready for them and their attendant, he added—

So, my love, you will have plenty to busy yourself about before I come. You will be delighted with these dear children: you will love them much for their own sake; but when you see their father you will love them for his sake

still more. Do not let Mrs. Parry, however, make herself in the least anxious about their accommodation; for they have been used to everything in the plainest way. I intend, while they remain at Norgrove, that you should entirely refit their slender wardrobe, and also instruct them for an hour or two every day, till we can send them to school. I feel quite sure my dear Maria will take the utmost pleasure in such a labour of love. The God of heaven bless you, my dear child, and keep you until we meet again, prays

Your ever fond father,

F. W.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Here I raise my *Ebeneser*,
Hither by Thy help I'm come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.

"Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed his precious blood."

NORGROVE HOUSE was now a busy scene. Mrs. Smith, the housekeeper, and all the servants were anxious to complete the arrangements before their master's arrival. Maria was not an idle spectator: but poor Mrs. Parry had become so weak as to be incapable of taking an active part. She felt, however, much interested, and it was with difficulty that Maria persuaded her to remain entirely quiescent.

On the fourth morning, just as breakfast was over, Maria had gone into Mrs. Parry's room, when Mrs. Smith came in almost out of breath:—"O dear, Ma'am,

we have just seen a carriage come in at the lodge: William says it looked like a travelling-carriage, with a great deal of luggage upon it. I have sent him to open the court-yard-gate." Before this announcement was finished, Maria was at the hall-door, and, in another instant, clasped in the arms of her delighted father. After the first congratulations were exchanged, Maria expressed her surprise at not seeing the little Verdans. "O! you will see them shortly," replied Mr. Wilson. "They are already in England. In fact, I brought them with me as far as Dover. It so happens that Susan has a relative at that place; and before we quitted Hamburg, their father and I agreed that I should leave them with Susan at her cousin's at Dover, where they should stay a few days; as it would tend to refresh them after the voyage. And then I engaged to have them accompanied thence by a person whom I could safely trust with the charge of them. As to myself, you know, I was anxious to make the best of my way home.—But how is poor Mrs. Parry? What does the doctor say?"—"She is much weaker," answered Maria. "The

doctor does not prescribe now: he only calls now and then, as a friend. You will be surprised when you see her: poor thing! she is so thin! but she is dozing now; for she has very little rest at night, her cough exhausts her so. But, dear papa, you look very much fatigued. Will you not have some breakfast? and after that you will let me help you to unpack."—"I do, indeed," said Mr. Wilson, "feel the want of some refreshment, having set off this morning at a very early hour."

Maria's delight, while she sat and made breakfast for her dear father, could not easily be described. To him too it was a sweet repast, while they conversed on many topics which his long absence had rendered doubly interesting. It was hard for him to restrain his feelings, and Maria's eyes were repeatedly filled with tears, when he adverted to the singular mercies he had experienced. "But I must forbear," said Mr. Wilson: "I have to tell you of a circumstance relative to Mrs. Parry, which we will not mention to her at present. I will tell you all about it in the evening."

When Mr. Wilson saw Mrs. Parry, he

was much struck with her appearance. Maria, who could now look at scarcely any other object but her dear father, was watching his looks, and observed a peculiar solicitude in his countenance as he gazed on the emaciated features of the poor widow, whose languid eye betrayed an inward grief, even while she rejoiced in her Saviour's love. Mr. Wilson understood well the meaning of that look: it was not the look of a spirit striving against the will of God, but that of one placidly resigned to the stroke of His hand.

"I can never sufficiently thank you," said she to Mr. Wilson.—"Do not thank me," said he, interrupting her: "do not attempt to express what I know you feel. I have been more than repaid by the services you have so faithfully rendered to my Maria, and by the confidence I felt while I was abroad in your integrity. I was happy *before* in helping you through your difficulties, because I felt compassion for one so heavily afflicted; but *now* I bless God for giving me an opportunity of shewing kindness to one whom I would regard as a *fellow-pilgrim* in the road to Zion. As to the future, Mrs. Parry, be

quite at ease: with the permission of our heavenly Father, this house shall be your earthly home: every comfort you can wish for shall be supplied: only make known your wishes to Maria, and I need not tell you how happy she will be in doing all she can to relieve and comfort you." The conversation now became less embarrassed. They began to talk freely on the change each had undergone. Mr. Wilson's affable manner opened a ready way to the workings of the heart; and from that hour Mrs. Parry lost the reserve she had felt in his presence, and could now tell all that passed in her mind without restraint.

Maria shewed her father the arrangements she had made for the reception of the little foreigners, which pleased him highly; while she asked him a number of questions about them, and seemed much delighted with the thoughts of having them under her care. Her remarks reminded him forcibly of an observation of Verdan's, —that the reception of divine truth in the human mind, has the effect of enlarging the understanding, and of elevating and refining the character. "I see this veri-

fied," thought he, "in my beloved child. Young as she is, she has all the staidness and discernment of twice her age." With this impression, the grateful parent scrupled not to acquaint his daughter with many particulars relative to his affairs, which otherwise he would not have deemed it prudent to disclose to her at so tender an age.

While Mr. Wilson was unpacking his trunks, Maria assisted him in replacing his clothes and linen in his wardrobes: but he had not proceeded far before he seemed at a loss. "Have you lost anything?" said Maria.—"Indeed, my love, I fear I have left it behind:—O! here it is!" said he, "in the bottom of this trunk. Here is a cloak lined with fur for you, and here is another equally warm, though not quite so costly, for poor Mrs. Parry. I bought them in Germany. And these furs are to draw over the feet. Take them to her, and the cloak, and tell her she will find them a comfort to her now the cold weather is coming, and they will keep her from taking cold in church." Maria, delighted with her father's kindness, took them, not however without a secret mis-

giving that poor Mrs. Parry could not long avail herself of it.

Dinner was ordered early:—"For, you know," said Mr. Wilson to Maria, "we have a great deal to talk about, and we shall want a long evening to ourselves." Dinner ended, and the servants withdrawn, "Now, my love, we are alone," said Mr. Wilson, "and I will begin to tell you some of the things you wish to know. You will be glad to hear I shall not have to go to the Continent again; as I have entirely given up all share in the foreign connexion."

Maria was rejoiced at this, and enquired in what circumstances the widow of his late partner was left?

"Why, you would have been sorry for her," said Mr. Wilson. "Her husband's share was much less than mine, therefore he had less to leave her. But he was an honourable character, and I esteemed him very highly. So I will tell you what I did. My withdrawing would have been a serious injury to the widow; in fact, it would have been a death-blow to the business. I therefore told her I would, if she was willing, dispose of the whole concern be-

fore I left Hamburgh, and whatever the sum might be that I could obtain for it, I would give the entire amount to her, including my share and all. For, you know, I have enough and to spare, (blessed be God,) without that. In a few days I succeeded far beyond my hopes with one of the wealthiest houses in Hamburgh, from whom I obtained cash and securities to such an amount as will yield the widow quite a competent income for the rest of her life. I cannot describe the grateful manner in which she expressed herself when I brought her the result of my bargain. Poor thing! I deserved no thanks for making her so happy; for it was to myself more a pleasure than a sacrifice."

"That is just what I was wishing," said Maria.

"And," continued the good merchant, "does it not shew how mindful God is of those dear relatives whom his servants have committed to his care in their dying prayers! how true the promise is, that He will be the God of the fatherless and the widow. I used to think of Job's memorial of his good deeds with *a proud satisfaction*, when I could do the like: but now, I trust,

I felt an humble delight in being *God's instrument* 'in pleading the cause of the widow,' and 'in making the widow's heart sing for joy.'

"But to come now to Danver, or rather I would say my dear friend Verdan: you will be surprised, Maria, at what I have to tell you. My first intention was to have given him an ample share in that business at Hamburgh: but he declined the most tempting offers I could make him. I pressed him again and again: no persuasions could prevail: at length, he said,—'I am in holy orders!—You are surprised,' continued he, 'and ready to ask what could induce me to become a merchant's clerk? I answer, two very urgent reasons—persecution and poverty. I may have done wrong; I had, however, no alternative for myself and my motherless babes, but death or the maintenance I obtained by writing for your late friend. I am now waiting for a favourable turn in the affairs of my country, which will leave me once more at liberty to preach the Gospel to my poor benighted fellow-countrymen. O, my friend!' he added, pressing my hand with grateful affection,

‘if you could have witnessed the trials I have sustained, while I was hunted like “a partridge in the mountains,” you would know better how to judge’——‘My dear friend,’ said I, ‘say no more. I trust God will grant you your heart’s desire, and soon open a way for you to resume your sacred calling.’ I then urged him to come over to England for a few months; which he will do as soon as he can assure himself of a safe route to come by. I therefore persuaded him to let me bring his children over with me. You may suppose, Maria, he was not easily prevailed upon to do that. He said he would not have intrusted them to any other man living.”

“Dear papa,” said Maria, “he must be very fond of *you*.”

“O! my dear child!” said Mr. Wilson, “what love I ought to bear towards *him*! Under God’s mercy, I owe more than all the world is worth to that dear man! He shall be our chaplain, Maria, while he is staying with us.”

“But, papa, there was some person you said you would tell me about, connected with dear Mrs. Parry.”

While Miss Wilson was speaking, George brought in the letter-bag. "Well, Maria," said Mr. Wilson, "let us first see if there be any business to be attended to. O! here's a letter from Colonel Jones. How prompt and friendly! he must have dispatched this even before I left London. Well, this is a fresh token of the providence of God over the fatherless. He has succeeded beyond my hopes. But I must answer the colonel's letter before the post departs. So, my dear, in the mean time, you shall order coffee: you know my peculiarity in taking it after dinner. And I hope we shall not be again interrupted while I finish the recital of my adventures, or rather of our heavenly Father's providential care for my preservation."

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Sovereign Ruler of the skies,
Ever gracious, ever wise!
All my times are in thy hand,
All events at thy command.
Plagues and deaths may round me fly—
Till thou bidst, I cannot die;
Not a single shaft can hit,
Till the God of love sees fit."

Ryland.

"YES, my dear child," resumed Mr. Wilson; "and you will think it one of the most remarkable providences that ever happened to me. It will be another token of mercy if poor Mrs. Parry's life is prolonged till he can come."

"Till who can come? M. Verdan?"

"No: observe this scar just above my temple: you will see it if you turn the hair a little aside. That mark, my child, must ever be a memorial of the Lord's mercy to an unworthy sinner! 'He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.' The circumstance was

this.—We were travelling from Hamburg in a carriage which I bought there: I had one of the children on the seat by my side, old Susan and the other child were on the seat opposite: George, my servant, was on the barouche seat in front. After we had proceeded about ten miles, we overtook a young man on foot, and passed him a little way; when coming to a rising ground, we went on at such a slow pace that the young man, although lame and fatigued, overtook us, and was walking by the side of the carriage. He had a military air about him, and under his surtout I observed the hilt of a sword. I looked at his face. There was something so interesting in his features, that I could not forbear speaking to him, and as he returned my glance I felt as though I were looking at a face I had seen somewhere before. We conversed a little, and I found him so intelligent and pleasing in his manners, that, as he was going to the next town on our route, and was already weary, I offered him a seat by the side of George. He seemed very thankful, and got up. George, you must observe, had already been furnished with a brace of

pistols, which he carried in his belt: and now, having added a military man to our forces, in the person of our new companion, we started afresh. We had not proceeded far, however, before three men rushed out of a thicket by the road-side. One of them stopped the horses, while the other two came up to the carriage-door and demanded my money. They had pistols in their hands, one of which was held pointed at my breast. George, you know, is very impetuous. Without giving me time to parley with the banditti, he instantly fired, and wounded one of them. Upon this, the other robber, who, as I told you, held a pistol pointed at me, immediately fired it off: but happily the man's arm was, at the instant of pulling the trigger, forced back; so that the ball merely passed near enough to graze my temple."

"What a merciful providence!" exclaimed Maria: "what could have turned the man's arm aside?"

"It was thus:—the young officer, who had already leaped down from the carriage, drew his sword, and struck the robber such a heavy blow on the arm, that he reeled backward. It was just then that

the pistol went off; but, being a little altered in its direction, the ball simply touched me, and my life was spared! There was a momentary struggle which ended in the officer's disarming his antagonist. The other two men, notwithstanding one of them had been wounded, now rushed in to rescue their companion; but, perceiving the determined resistance of our brave defenders, they left their chief disabled and bleeding on the ground, and fled."

"Dear papa, what a narrow escape!"

"It was indeed, my love. 'I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day.'

"As soon as I had time to look about me, I found old Susan had got the two children clasped in her arms, and completely hidden under her cloak. We began to enquire, who was hurt? but the attention of every one was directed towards me; for the blood was observed to be running down my cheek. I was anxious, however, to get forward; as soon, therefore, as Susan had bound a hand-

kerchief round my head, we pursued our journey as speedily as the rough state of the roads would admit.

“ On arriving at the town where we had to pass the night, having desired Susan to give the children something nice for supper, and to put them to bed, I sent for a surgeon, who soon stopped the bleeding, and assured me the wound was slight: but as I felt much exhausted from the loss of so much blood, he desired they would place me on a bed and keep me quiet. The young officer was very assiduous all the while, in waiting on the surgeon, and helping George, and after I was comfortably laid in bed, entreated I would allow him to sit up with me in the night. ‘ I have attended, Sir, to many a wounded comrade through the night, and well know how needful it is to watch over them after they have been long bleeding,’ said he, looking at me with an affectionate concern: and, stranger though he was, I felt no hesitation in committing myself to his care. There was a something in his look that I could not withstand. I insisted, however, that George should take a share in the watching; for otherwise I knew the poor

fellow would have felt dissatisfied. It was a great comfort to me to find that neither of them had been much hurt in the conflict. I soon fell asleep, which refreshed me a good deal.

“When I awoke, I found the stranger sitting near me. At first, I was startled; for I did not immediately recollect where I was, and the sight of the young man’s face gave me quite a thrilling sensation.”

“You mentioned his face before: was there anything peculiarly striking in it?”

“Ay; and in his voice too, Maria. You will soon perceive what it was. After taking some refreshment, (which he prepared for me as expertly as a well-practised nurse,)—‘Now,’ said I, ‘you must tell me what I can do for you on your arrival in England. You have generously and bravely hazarded your own life in defending mine. Through a merciful providence you were chiefly the means of preserving my life, and the lives of those that were under my care, not regarding your own safety. Be assured, therefore, you shall not want a friend, if I can serve you. I must insist on your travelling the remainder of the journey with me. But

pray tell me who my gallant preserver is?’

“ ‘Sir,’ he replied, ‘it can avail little to tell you who I am. You see before you a self-banished outcast; without an object in pursuit, *save one in which your kind wish to serve me must prove fruitless.*’ He paused; but seeing me looking anxiously at him, he proceeded:—‘Sir, I will tell you in few words what I have been, and what is my only remaining wish. Some years since, being wholly given to pleasure, (as it is falsely called,) I left my native country in a clandestine manner: the unhappy woman, my companion in sin, died in a fever-hospital in Flanders. After that, I wandered from place to place until all my money was spent. I was now continually exposed to danger and want, until I was seized by a party of soldiers, who compelled me to carry part of their baggage and provisions. Finding myself too narrowly watched to admit of any hope of making my escape from them, I reconciled myself as well as I could to my situation. I remained thus attached to the corps for three years, and was taken into the immediate service of a commis-

sariat. After surviving many severe engagements, a battle took place in which our regiment was literally cut to pieces. The field was covered with maimed and slaughtered soldiers, officers, and horses. I was struck by a spent shot, and left among the dead and dying. I was stunned, but otherwise little hurt; and as the evening came on I began to recover myself. It was nearly dark: the din of arms was no longer heard: all was still around me, save the groans of the wounded. I arose, and found myself near one of the store-waggons of which I had the charge. I knew where I could find some biscuits and a small bottle of brandy; and, having got possession of these, and seized a horse which had lost its rider, I mounted, and rode off. On the evening of the next day, I had arrived at a considerable distance from the scene of action, and met with a farmer who was induced to give me a sum of money in exchange for the horse. I now made the best of my way out of the country on foot, resolving at all hazards to attempt my escape to England. During my captivity among those soldiers, I passed many a sorrowful hour in serious reflec-

tions on my unhappy, my deeply-criminal conduct; and in the course of my flight through this hostile land my self-reproaching thoughts returned with increasing force. I have made the most solemn resolutions of amendment, and I do hope, Sir, that with the gracious assistance of Almighty God I shall keep stedfast.’—‘God give you a new heart!’ said I, ‘and then you will. But you have not yet told me all. What friends have you in England? and what are your prospects there?’—‘Sir,’ he rejoined, ‘I have little more to disclose. I know not that I have one relative or friend left. In the height of my wickedness I was utterly reckless of life: but *now* I have a very strong desire to live until I can return to my afflicted mother; if she be still alive,—if my ungrateful conduct has not already brought her with sorrow to——’—‘Young man,’ cried I, interrupting him, ‘do not give way to your emotions: I do hope we shall find your mother living.’—‘*We!*’ he exclaimed, struck by my manner, ‘O, Sir! what is the meaning of that?’ I entreated him to be calm, and, with some impatience, enquired if his mother was not a widow

of the name of Parry? At this, he threw himself on his knees at the side of the bed, and seized one of my hands, exclaiming,—‘ Ah! dear Sir, what strange providence is this! is it possible you can know my mother? O! tell me where I can find her?’ You will imagine, Maria,” proceeded Mr. Wilson, “that I was almost as much overcome as the young man. I had, however, strength enough to restrain my feelings. We were both indeed relieved by a flood of tears. I presently ascertained that I was right in my conjectures, and that this returning wanderer was indeed your beloved Mrs. Parry’s lost child.—

“But, my dear, I must now break the thread of my narrative. I expect Owen Parry will be here the day after to-morrow: and it is time we should begin to give his mother some preparatory hint, that she may not be taken too much by surprise.”

“Dear father,” said Maria, “what a strange event! how wonderfully did the providence of God interpose to bring the poor young man in your way! The news will be almost too much for poor Mrs. Parry.”

“Go then, my love,” he rejoined, “and begin to make her gradually acquainted with the happiness in store for her. I am sure you will manage the business judiciously.”

Maria obeyed the injunction with alacrity. The widowed mother, though much agitated by the disclosure, instantly saw the hand of her heavenly Father in the event, and prayed to be enabled to leave its accomplishment to His all-wise and merciful providence. Half afraid lest some unforeseen disaster might after all prevent her long-lost son's return, she checked the tide of joy that was rising in her breast, and said, “‘It is the Lord! let Him do what seemeth him good.’”

CHAPTER XIX.

“Holy Spirit! Breath of balm!
 Fall on us in evening’s calm:—
 Yet awhile, before we sleep,
 We with Thee will vigils keep:
 * * * * *
 Melt our spirits, mould our will;
 Soften, strengthen, comfort still.”

ON Maria’s return, Mr. Wilson said, “Now, my dear, you shall help me to arrange a duty I have too long neglected: I mean family devotion. For years past I have regarded it as a duty; but felt myself unqualified for so serious an engagement; I thought myself a very improper person to take the lead in a religious exercise. Thus I was tempted to omit it altogether. This was wrong; for the more unworthy we are, the more diligent we should be: who should pray but sinners? ‘They that be whole need not the physician; but they that are sick.’ My man, George, is apprized of my intentions,

and will advocate the design among the other servants. He has a notion of music, and a tolerable voice. We will provide him with some proper tunes, which he shall learn, and then, after a little while, we shall be able to sing as well as pray. I am now going for a moment into my room: in the mean time, my dear, ring the bell for Smith: tell her my wishes, and bid her assemble the servants, and I will soon join you again."

With tears of joy Maria told Mrs. Smith her papa's wishes. The housekeeper received the order with apparent cheerfulness, while she shewed at the same time a certain air of self-satisfaction which indicated that she thought herself by no means unmindful of the duty of worshipping God. She was, however, sensible of the kindness she had always experienced in her master's service, whom she had ever venerated as a pattern of goodness little short of perfection. It was thus she esteemed her master's character, during the years in which he was accustomed to pay but a scanty and unwilling regard to religious duties. She thought him then quite as pious "as a gentleman need be." She

was, therefore, now a little inclined to question the propriety of her master's "turning his house into a conventicle!" But she kept her thoughts to herself, and very readily attended to his injunctions.

In a few minutes Mr. Wilson returned, followed by George bearing a large packet of Bibles, one of which was given to each of the servants. Mrs. Parry, having been apprized by Maria of what was going forward, exerted herself to join the little congregation, and came into the room leaning on Maria and the nurse.

Being all seated, Mr. Wilson told them how he had resolved to gather his household together morning and night, for the purpose of offering up prayer and praise to God; that reading and considering a portion of God's word would be a suitable preparation for the exercise, as well as a means of making himself and them better acquainted with their only guide to eternal happiness. Mr. Wilson's kind manner of addressing them, although somewhat embarrassed by his own feelings, was calculated to win their serious attention. All listened to him with mingled surprise and respect, while he read first a suitable por-

tion of Scripture, followed by a short instructive comment, and then an appropriate and expressive prayer. The service being concluded, the domestics retired with serious and grateful expressions in their looks. Mrs. Parry was left for a few minutes with Maria and her father. After a short pause, Mr. Wilson said, "Mrs. Parry, you have been surprised perhaps at my thus venturing to lead a religious service in my family. It has cost me not a little to bring down my proud spirit to acknowledge my former neglect of this duty. But what am I saying? It is not I that have subdued my heart, but rather a divine power. Why did they not tell me what a pharisee I was? but if they had, the time was not come: no, it was not come. I knew not my own heart then. But what do I know even now? one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

Mrs. Parry, much comforted by what she had heard, was now assisted out of the room, accompanied by her dear Miss Wilson, whose heart was so full that she thankfully seized the opportunity of retiring to her room, where she

gave vent to her emotions in tears and praises.

The next morning at breakfast, Maria began to enquire in what way her father intended to dispose of young Parry? "That, my dear," said Mr. Wilson, "is the very thing I wished to tell you. It is quite right you should know what arrangements I have been thinking of. I left him at Dover in charge of old Susan and the little Verdans: and, in fact, it was quite necessary he should get some clothes; for he was, poor fellow! in a sad tattered condition. As soon as he has got himself in decent trim, he comes on by the readiest conveyance. He may possibly get here this evening."

"And are the children to come with him?" enquired Maria.

"No; he is to come first, and, after he has spent a day or two with his mother, he is to return to Dover and bring them."

"I suppose, papa, he had no money?"

"He had nothing left of his little hoard, save two or three dollars, and a few odd pieces of silver; but I gave him as much as he could want. With regard to his future maintenance, I had some thoughts

of putting him into a trade; but conceiving his habits and inclinations were altogether suited to a military life, I called on Colonel Jones as I passed through London, who expressed himself much pleased in having an opportunity of obliging me, and assured me he had it in his power to get young Parry a commission immediately, in a regiment in which the junior officers were remarkably steady. And the letter I received from the colonel yesterday, brought me the gratifying intelligence, that he had succeeded in securing the commission for him. So that, with God's blessing, Owen will be very well provided for."

"Yes," said Maria; "and how thankful his dear mother will be!"

CHAPTER XX.

"That field of promise! how it flings abroad
Its odour o'er the Christian's thorny road!
The soul, reposing on assured relief,
Feels herself happy amidst all her grief,
Forgets her labour as she toils along,
Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song."

Cowper.

AT the time Mr. Wilson had calculated, Owen Parry arrived at Norgrove House, and was most kindly welcomed by his grateful and generous friend. Maria had already prepared his mother to expect him. In answer to his anxious enquiries, Mr. Wilson calmly, but with an affectionate sympathy, apprized him of her altered appearance. "But," said he, "you shall not venture to see her until you have had some refreshment." While Owen was thus occupied with Mr. Wilson, Maria was arranging matters in Mrs. Parry's room, who was seated in her easy-chair; and the nurse was desired to remain in the

adjoining chamber. Mr. Wilson then came up with the long-lost son, whom he cautioned against an immoderate expression of his feelings.

The interview was too affecting to be described. As soon as Owen could find utterance, he exclaimed,—“O, my mother! my dear mother! can you indeed acknowledge me—undutiful—ungrateful as I have been?” His delighted mother could only answer him with her tears, while she pressed him to her bosom. As soon as Mr. Wilson perceived that Mrs. Parry had regained sufficient composure, he led Maria out of the room, and left the delighted parent and her restored child to the enjoyment of conversing together on all that had happened to them since their separation.

“Well, Maria,” said Mr. Wilson, “let us be thankful poor Mrs. Parry has borne this trying scene so well.”—“O yes,” said Maria; “I could not have thought it possible, she is so weak. But what a likeness! The high cheek-bones,—the peculiar expression of his dark-grey eyes,—the tone of his voice; all just the same as his mother’s. I see now why it was that you

were so forcibly struck with a prepossession in his favour before you knew who he was."

At this moment a carriage arrived, and the servant announced Mr. Darnley, who entered the room, followed by Emma and her brother, a young man of great promise, who had nearly completed his terms at College. Miss Melville also formed one of the party. The greeting and the conversation which ensued were highly interesting. Mr. Darnley soon observed the change that had taken place in his old schoolfellow, Mr. Wilson; but as the young people were present he forbore making any remarks upon it. The hour was spent in the most gratifying manner to all parties. The renewal of their acquaintance was a source of real pleasure to the two gentlemen.

"I felt sure," said Mr. Darnley, "you would excuse my calling so soon after your return, which I heard of yesterday. My son Edward, too, was anxious to embrace this opportunity of paying his respects to you, as he must return to College to-morrow."

"My kind friend," said Mr. Wilson to

Mr. Darnley, "a call from you at any time cannot be unseasonable. I assure you I feel an increasing value for your society. And Mr. Edward Darnley too:—I hope he and I shall have many opportunities of forming a lasting esteem for each other."

But the time was not expended in the interchange of compliments: the conversation was soon turned into a religious channel; and, in answer to some enquiries relative to the progress of the Gospel on the Continent, Mr. Wilson's remarks disclosed, unconsciously to himself, his own rapid progress in the knowledge of Scriptural truth.

While Mr. Wilson was thus occupied with the Darnleys, Maria was telling Miss Melville of young Parry's return; when Emma, perceiving that her papa was preparing to leave, whispered to Maria, "You must allow me just to run out with Edward to shew him your favourite walk;" and, without waiting for a reply, she slipped through an open French door, beckoning to her brother to follow. Edward Darnley was highly pleased with the taste with which this beautiful retirement was laid

out. When they came to the alcove, he observed a small shelf of books. He eagerly looked over the titles, and found among them some of his own favourites:—Cowper's Poems, Hervey's Theron and Aspasio, Newton's Cardiphonia, and Henry Martyn's Life. He was even delighted to discover old-fashioned John Bunyan among them. For much as young Darnley had been devoted to literary studies, he had imbibed, notwithstanding, an ardent love for the truths of the Gospel, and relished them most in those authors who dealt most faithfully with the heart. In this propensity, it must be confessed, he was not a little singular: for seldom do we meet with the youthful student whose soul really feeds on the word of God, and receives with self-appropriation the experimental reasonings of men, who wrote not to please the world, but to draw the heart to Christ.

Hastening back to the house, they found the carriage at the door. Mr. Darnley was coming out with Mr. Wilson conversing about the venerable Mr. Jervis. "You have no afternoon-service at your church," said Mr. Darnley; "and if you should be

disposed to come to Maymead in the evening, we shall have great pleasure in accommodating you and Miss Wilson in our pew." Mr. Wilson gladly accepted the offer. The ladies now came out. Miss Melville said to Maria, "Give my love to dear Mrs. Parry, and tell her I would not on any account interrupt the happiness she enjoys this morning. But, you know, I am so soon to be here again, if all be well: and then you and I will spend a retired hour with her." The Wilsons and Darnleys, with Miss Melville, then took leave of each other, mutually gratified, and the carriage drove away.

Mr. Wilson then sent for Olave, the nurse, who told him Mrs. Parry was very comfortable. "Well," said Mr. Wilson, "we are fearful she will exert herself too much, and increase the feverish symptoms. Tell her so, Olave; and say we are going out to walk, and, on our return, if she can spare Mr. Owen Parry a little, he shall go to her again in the evening."

Mr. Wilson took his beloved Maria with him, and visited his little farm, and some of his cottages. The time passed rapidly away, while they conversed on the most

interesting topics. Soon after their return, Mr. Wilson took Owen Parry into his private room, and informed him of his having obtained him a commission in the army. This intelligence drew tears of gratitude from poor Owen, while he expressed his firm resolution to adhere strictly to the good advice Mr. Wilson had given him. "My young friend," said Mr. Wilson, "the God of all grace alone can enable you to do that. Look to Him, and may He look in mercy upon *you!*"

The next day, being Sunday, Mr. Wilson went in the morning with his family to the parish-church. This he had resolved to do regularly as a matter of duty. He was greatly absorbed in the service, which he had not heard for a long time. As they returned home, he remarked that the sermon was dull and heartless, compared with the liturgy: though many good maxims were urged, "the one thing needful" seemed to have been forgotten.

"Ah! my dear father," said Maria, "how I wish you could hear that good preacher, Mr. Jervis!"

"We will go this evening and hear him,"

replied Mr. Wilson, "as our own church will not be open."

The carriage was ordered accordingly. As they were approaching near Maymead church, which stood on a gentle eminence, they could perceive a great number of persons entering in: several also they overtook as they passed along the road; and, at length, they came to a large number of Sunday-school children pressing towards the church in the most regular order.

"All this," observed Mr. Wilson, "is very different to what we see at Norgrove, where we meet with only a few of the more elderly inhabitants, who seem as little interested in the service as they would be in a chapter of Locke's Essay."

At Maymead, the liturgy seemed to Mr. Wilson still more impressive, being read by one whose heart was in accordance with the words. All the congregation joined in the service, and in the singing seemed to have one heart and one voice.

Mr. Jervis preached from Isaiah lv. i. —"Ho, every one that thirsteth, &c." The sermon was well calculated to awaken and encourage. While the various characters to whom the subject was applicable

were described, Mr. Wilson reflected—
“If the thirsty are invited, I am among the number: sick of the deadly poison of sin, I long for the water of life.” To Maria it was altogether a rich feast.

Owen Parry was much impressed, and told his anxious mother he had never heard anything like it.

“God grant,” said she, “that my dear boy may feel the power of it in his heart and life!”

“I never heard a man go on as he did about Jesus Christ,” said Owen.

“Yes,” rejoined his mother; “because there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

“But, *you*,” said he, “never wandered out of the right way, as I have done.”

“‘All we like sheep,’” said she, “‘have gone astray; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.’”

CHAPTER XXI.

"O! then to think of meeting there
The friends, whose grave received our tear!
The child long lost, the wife bereaved,
Back to our widowed arms received!
And all the joys which death did sever,
Given to us again for ever!"

H. K. White.

THE next day, young Parry was dispatched, after taking an affecting leave of his mother, to Dover for the children and Susan. In the interval Mr. Wilson, accompanied by Maria, drove to Mrs. Melville's and Mr. Darnley's, for the purpose of bringing home with them, according to a previous engagement, Miss Melville and Emma to spend a week with Maria. Mr. Wilson took the opportunity of calling on Mr. Jervis, from whom he wished to learn what further aid might be needful to promote Mrs. Melville's comfort, as well as to gather some spiritual instruction from the good vicar's conversation.

Having left Maria at Mrs. Melville's, and promised to call again and spend half an hour with the good old lady on his return with Emma from Mr. Darnley's, he stopped at the door of the vicarage, and begged to see Mr. Jervis, if he was disengaged. The neat elderly female who came to the door, told him that both Mr. and Mrs. Jervis were out. He then drove on to Mr. Darnley's, where he found the venerable pastor.

The three gentlemen passed a very happy and profitable hour together. Among other subjects which they discussed, Mr. Wilson was anxious to learn Mr. Jervis's opinion on the question—"Whether Christian friends will be able to recognise each other in heaven?"

Mr. Jervis said, that although some able writers had expressed themselves doubtful on this point, yet to him the Scriptures appeared to favour the supposition that we shall know each other again. "A strong argument in its favour," said the vicar, "may be drawn from the rich man (in the parable) knowing Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, and from Mary knowing Jesus, when she said 'Rabboni.' But

not to insist on these and some other circumstances mentioned in Scripture, I think every doubt is removed by this one simple view of the subject.—All agree that our happiness in heaven will be *complete*: but if this delightful source of pleasure,—our knowledge of one another,—were discontinued in heaven, surely there would be a deficiency in our happiness there: it would be incomplete. To me, the very idea that the time will come when a privilege once so highly prized must be enjoyed no longer, seems utterly contrary to the notion of a state of glory, where every *foretaste* will be exchanged for a *full enjoyment* of bliss.”

Thus happily did these three friends talk of the things which lay so near their hearts. If Mr. Wilson felt refreshed by the animating manner in which the vicar spoke of the love of Christ, the vicar felt no less interested in the childlike earnestness with which the merchant listened to him.

On his return to the vicarage, Mr. Jervis hastened into the sitting-room. “Esther, my dear,” said he, “I have some delightful news for you.”

"Have you?" replied Mrs. Jervis: "has our Almighty Shepherd brought another lost wanderer into the fold? that would be good news indeed!"

"If I am not greatly mistaken, my love, I have just met with one of the dear sheep whom He has found and brought back."

"Blessed be the name of the Lord! O happy soul! is it any one I know? Mr. Wilson called here this morning, and left his card: but surely it cannot be he; for, generous and charitable as he always appeared, he was thought to be quite unconscious of his lost condition. But what cannot grace effect?"

"He is the very person, Esther. I think I never met with a more evident change. We have spent the morning together at Darnley Lodge. You would have been delighted had you seen how earnest and humble he was, asking my opinion on some points of conscience, and listening like a child while I explained some of the passages I quoted. You have no longer the distant, forbidding kind of feeling, which even his habitual gentleness could not conceal, whenever you ventured a religious remark in his presence: but now

you feel at once in the society of a friend and brother whom you love and admire. And, notwithstanding all this, he is as business-like as ever in his charities. He made particular enquiries into the state of Mrs. Melville's affairs, and, while Mr. Darnley was out of the room, put these two bank-bills into my hand; requesting me to lay out the one for dear Mrs. Melville, and the other in supplies for any of our poor people who have especial claims upon our help. He thanked me in the most gentlemanly terms for my kindness (as he called it) towards Mrs. Melville, and entreated me to accept this valuable copy of a Hebrew Bible, which he purchased expressly for me at Rotterdam. See what a beautiful impression it is! May we not look on all these circumstances as proofs that his prejudices are gone, and that he begins to feel the power of the faith that works by love? 'Surely this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes!'"

"O!" exclaimed Mrs. Jervis, "what a wonderful change! Glory be to God! this is good news! But do not you suspect," continued she, while her husband, with an

eye beaming with delight and thankfulness, was turning over the leaves of his new Bible,—“do you not suspect that there is something like a partiality in Mr. Wilson’s mind towards Miss Melville?”

“Not in the least,” replied the vicar: “I believe it is only a feeling of gratitude for the singular benefit his daughter derived from Eliza Melville’s instructions. He is and always was excessively fond of his daughter; and, I imagine, no father can have greater reason to rejoice in what the Lord has done for his child, than the father of Maria Wilson.”

While Miss Melville was visiting at Norgrove House, she spent an hour twice a day with Mrs. Parry. They met at other times also; but this hour was especially set apart for conversing on the things of God, reading, and prayer. The privilege became a source of great enjoyment to poor Mrs. Parry: her views of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel became more distinct and settled; her faith in the Saviour’s love was strengthened, while she resigned herself with more entire submission to His will.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Kindred in Christ, for his dear sake,
A hearty welcome here receive;
May we together now partake
The joys which only He can give.

• • • • •

"May He by whose kind care we meet,
Send his good Spirit from above;
Make our communications sweet,
And cause our hearts to burn with love."

Newton.

It was at this period too that Mrs. Pearson arrived at Norgrove. She was anxious to see Mrs. Parry again; for Mr. Wilson had written to inform her that she was gradually sinking. Mrs. Pearson hastened to obey the call, and, at Mr. Wilson's earnest request, prevailed upon Mr. Pearson to follow her in a few days and spend a short time under Mr. Wilson's roof. They that have tasted the streams that flow from the fountain of living waters would not lock them up, but seek means of making others also partakers of the gift. Thus felt Mr. Wilson towards his

beloved relatives, while he said to Maria, "Write pressingly to your aunt, my love; and desire her to persuade her husband either to accompany her or shortly after to join us. Then we will get the Jervises and Darnleys to meet them. We are sure your aunt will be delighted with Mr. Jervis's conversation; and who knows but Mr. Pearson's prejudices may yield a little in the society of our good friends? You smile, Maria: but I well know what your uncle's prejudices are by what I once felt myself. Let us, however, look upwards. 'Is anything too hard for the Lord?' as Mr. Jervis argued last Sunday."

On the appointed day, Mr. and Mrs. Darnley drove to the door, bringing in their carriage the good vicar and his amiable wife. They were received by the hospitable Mr. Wilson with a pleasure unknown to the world. He presently introduced to them Mrs. Pearson, who had arrived a few days before. Maria immediately joined them, accompanied by Miss Melville and Emma. Thus my readers may imagine what a happy little flock were now gathered together at Norgrove House, having one common wish,—to be the means

of adding to each other's true peace, and of edifying one another in the faith of Christ. I must not forget, however, to inform my readers that Mrs. Arnold had joined the party; having been invited at the particular request of Maria, who always felt grateful for the kindness she had experienced at Merton Grove.

After Mr. Wilson's guests had partaken of some refreshment, they accompanied him in a walk through the shrubbery; and while they were there, admiring the beauties of the scenery, and the taste displayed in the laying out of the grounds, another carriage arrived. Mr. Wilson alone observed its approach, and, without noticing the circumstance to his friends, hastened towards the house. The vehicle appeared to be heavily laden: it stopped at the courtyard-gate, and Mr. Wilson perceived that one of the persons on the box jumped down, and lifted two little children out of the carriage. He instantly recognised Owen Parry and the little Verdans. He then saw another person alighting, whose slender figure convinced him it must be Verdan himself. Great was the joy of the two friends at meeting again. It is

impossible to decribe Mr. Wilson's emotions as he embraced his beloved Verdan. The children looked as though they ought to have a share in the joy, while their kind English friend kissed them with tears of delight. He gave old Susan too a hearty shake by the hand, and, with a cordial welcome, thanked Owen Parry for bringing them all, under God's kind providence, to their journey's end.

"What an unlooked-for pleasure is this!" said Mr. Wilson to M. Verdan.

"Indeed, my dear Sir," rejoined Verdan, "I little expected myself to have reached your peaceful English shore so soon; but a kind providence opened a way of escape for me. A thousand thanks, my dear friend, for the care you have taken of my little treasures."

"No thanks to me, my friend," said Mr. Wilson: "have you not taught me to do all for the love of Jesus Christ?"

Mr. Wilson then took M. Verdan to the rooms he had reserved for him, and, opening an adjoining door, shewed him a nursery and bedroom nicely fitted up for the children.

"Alas!" exclaimed Verdan, as he sur-

veyed the preparations that had been made for his reception, "you seem, my dear Sir, to have anticipated a vast number of wants to which we have long been strangers. All this will unfit us for our future life."

"Ah!" said his delighted friend, "if these little arrangements can add to your comfort, Maria will be satisfied; for it is she that contrived it all, and she certainly *was* anxious to have it done well. But I must let her know you are arrived.—O! here she comes: she has already got possession of your little ones and is bringing them up stairs.—So, Maria, you were not long, I suppose, in making yourself known to your little guests. And now, my love, I can do myself the pleasure of introducing you to their beloved father, Monsieur Verdan."

Maria welcomed the good refugee with an artless expression of the esteem and veneration with which she regarded the spiritual guide and friend of her dear parent.

In compliance with Verdan's feelings, Mr. Wilson agreed that he should not be required to join the company until after

dinner. In the mean while, Maria and Emma busied themselves, with old Susan, in getting refreshment for the children, and in attiring them in some new apparel out of a wardrobe, which, by their own diligence, and the help of a seamstress, they had just got completely stocked with a variety of very nice clothes for the little foreigners.

Owen Parry hastened to his mother's chamber. Delighted as she was to see him again, her heart was more deeply affected for his spiritual state. She began, therefore, to converse on some of the striking passages of Scripture, which had for the last few days occupied her thoughts. Owen listened to her attentively, and said, "I perceive a great difference in people: some can never see further into the Scriptures than what little they have learned about death and judgment, and the duty we owe to one another; while others, like you, seem to be so much taken with those parts which speak of our Saviour, or as you and such as M. Verdan would express it—'reveal Christ to us'—that the Bible would be nothing without *them*."

"Ah! my son," said the widow, "with-

out Christ the best of books would be no better than a barren wilderness without the sun."

"I am sure," said Owen, "you will like the French clergyman very much: he has such amazing knowledge of the Scriptures, and he thinks just the same as you do."

"My dear Owen," said the widow, "'the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.'"

"That," said Owen, "is just what"——
At this moment the nurse brought up a message from Mr. Wilson, desiring him to prepare for dinner.

When the family assembled, the worthy merchant told his guests of the arrivals that had taken place while they were out walking. They were all anxious to see the foreigner, and the ladies hoped it would not be long after dinner before he made his appearance. "But," said Mr. Wilson, "however gratified you will be in the society of that most extraordinary man, I am sure you will welcome the brave young officer to whom I and my family are so deeply indebted. I have, therefore, insisted on his dining with us.

Here he is!" Owen Parry now entered the room, and was not a little surprised to find himself so kindly received by a number of strangers.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"There is a secret in the ways of God,
With his own children, which none others know,
That sweetens all he does :—"

Swaine.

AFTER dinner, Owen Parry was requested to gratify the wishes of the company by relating some particulars of his history; which led Mr. Jervis to observe how remarkably the ways of Providence had brought about his restoration to his afflicted mother. "Arguing after the manner of men," said the spiritually-minded vicar, "if Mr. Parry had not been compelled to accompany those soldiers, he might have been to this hour a wandering outcast in a foreign land; or, if he had attempted to escape from his military masters *before* that decisive battle which he has just described, he might have been pursued and shot; or, had he not made his first day's flight on *horseback*, he might

have been a few hours too late to have met with Mr. Wilson."

"Yes," added the grateful merchant: "and who can tell what might have been the consequence, if we had not met with our gallant defender just before the robbers attacked us?"

"Some reasoners," continued the vicar, "object to our drawing inferences from probabilities; but I think we are fully justified in at least reviewing the Lord's dealings with us in such a light as sets forth the praises of His grace. I think the Scriptures furnish more than one example of the kind of reasoning I refer to: as where the sisters of Lazarus said to our Lord, one after the other, 'Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!'—Also where the angel of the Lord said to Balaam, 'And the ass saw me and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee and saved her alive.'"

"Had you any scruples relative to quitting the regiment to which you were attached?" asked Mr. Darnley.

"Sir," replied Owen, "there were many considerations which I conceive fully jus-

tified that step. The death of the commissariat"—

"The commissariat!" exclaimed Mr. Wilson.

"Yes, indeed, Sir," rejoined Owen: "but when I first told you my history, my feelings induced me to pass over that distressing occurrence. And here I must acknowledge that I have been very faulty in not having called your attention until the present moment to a particular circumstance: but the extraordinary things which took place on that memorable day when you met with me, Sir; my astonishment on discovering that my mother was known to you, and resident in your family; the anticipation of the manner in which she would receive me; and my impatience to reach this place;—all these things so absorbed my thoughts, that other matters lost their interest: so that when I came off from Dover (that first time) I forgot to bring with me a small box I purchased there; and it could be, I thought, of little avail to refer to the subject, unless I had the miniature, which I left locked up in the box."

"What miniature?" asked Mr. Wilson.

"Well, Sir, I ought," continued Owen,

“first to tell you that the commissariat was a very different character to what almost universally prevails among officers in foreign regiments of the present day. He was not only brave, of an amiable temper, generous, and well-educated; but most strictly and scrupulously honourable. I was careful to serve him to the best of my ability, and he, in return, shewed me great kindness, and at length placed unreserved confidence in me. He procured me a commission, stipulating, however, that I should remain attached to his department. But, to my great grief, in that murderous battle, my kind protector, the only friend I had, was numbered with the slain. I was not far from the spot where he fell. I instantly ran up to him, and endeavoured to stop the blood that was flowing fast.—‘Parry,’ said he, in a faltering tone, ‘I have not long to live.’ He then with difficulty put his hand into his breast-pocket, and pulled out a small case and a pocket-testament. His look was that of perfect resignation: his voice began to fail: I listened with extreme carefulness, that I might not lose the sentences, which were now broken and faintly

uttered. 'Parry,' he continued, 'I am a native of England: in a fit of desperation, occasioned by a severe disappointment, I fled from my country never to return. My heart has been oppressed with ceaseless regrets known only to itself; but, notwithstanding all my sufferings, I have never failed to derive consolation and support from this precious little volume: accept it as a remembrance of me.' He then gave me the Testament and his purse, and added, 'Take also this little casket: seize the opportunity of escaping to England, and if ever you meet with my surviving relatives, give them the casket, and tell them that in the midst of these infidels I die a Christian.' His voice now entirely failed: he raised his eyes to heaven, and seemed for a few moments to be engaged in prayer, and with a sweet heavenly expression of serenity breathed his last. I laid him gently down, and was stooping and weeping over him, when I was struck by a spent shot and thrown upon a heap of the slain. On recovering my senses, I began to reflect on my situation: my only friend lay dead by my side: the other officers in the corps—whichever of them

might have survived the battle—were despicable characters,—cruel, treacherous, and dissolute. (I had begun, Sir, to hate the wicked life I had led myself.) Well, Sir, I knew these licentious men bore a secret enmity against me, and I had no wish to return to their society. The commissariat's last words seemed to be still sounding in my ears, and I resolved instantly to obey his dying counsel, and make my escape."

All were now anxious to see the portrait, and, while the lieutenant was gone out of the room to fetch it, the vicar remarked—"What a consolatory instance is this of the prevailing power of Gospel-truth! Without pronouncing an opinion as to the dying officer's final state, his parting expressions certainly bear an affecting testimony to the wonder-working efficacy of the word of God:—'So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void'——"

Before the vicar could finish the quotation, Owen came back with a small leather case, which he placed in the hands of Mr. Wilson. It contained a miniature, which was looked at with much curiosity by all

the party. "I have never seen any one like it"—was reiterated in succession as the little picture was passed from one to another.

"Was it like the officer?" asked several voices.

"It was a striking likeness; only that he had a peculiarly melancholy air, which does not appear in the picture."

"What was his name?"—"You have not yet told us his name."

"He went by the name of Huber; but whether it was real or assumed I was never informed."

"If the portrait were really intended for a likeness of the commissariat, as you suppose," observed Mr. Darnley, "it seems rather strange that he should have it in his own possession. It is not usual, I think, for a gentleman to carry about his own person a likeness of himself. How do you account for *that*, Mr. Parry?"

"Sir," said Owen, "he pressed my hand with a convulsive grasp as I held the casket: some incoherent words quivered on his lips: I could only distinguish these expressions,—‘The unhappy hour’—‘was returned to me’—‘that hair.’ This was

all I could collect. You see there is some hair curiously braided and placed under the glass round the verge of the miniature."

"Was his own hair of that colour?"

"O! no: quite different."

"There can be no doubt," remarked Mr. Darnley, "that the 'severe disappointment' was closely connected with the history of this picture."

"Well, Miss Darnley," said the kind vicar, who observed that Emma was whispering to Maria, "what do you think of it? come, you must tell us."

Emma coloured, and said, "I was thinking, Sir, that the poor gentleman kept the miniature in his own possession for the sake of that hair."

"I think so too, my dear," rejoined the vicar.

In the mean time, the miniature, which was now in the hands of Emma Darnley, had been examined by every one excepting Mrs. Arnold. She had taken out her spectacles, wiped them with her handkerchief, and put them on, that she might be quite prepared: while Emma, out of a feeling of respect to Mrs. Arnold, merely

glanced at the portrait and presented it to her, at the same time narrowly watching her looks. In a moment after, Emma turned to Maria, and said in a whisper, "Maria, do observe the good old lady's looks. I do think she has some idea who it is. I thought if any one could find it out *she* could."

"Perhaps, Madam," said Mr. Darnley, "you are not altogether a stranger to the face?"

"Every feature seems familiar to me," replied Mrs. Arnold; "but where I have seen the original I cannot——." She paused, and took off her spectacles. "O! now I remember: it was in a family in which I was governess some years ago. I never saw the person himself; but there was a portrait which I very frequently saw; and this miniature is so strikingly like the painting that I feel persuaded they were both intended for the same person."

Every one heard this announcement with surprise. "What was the name of the family?" enquired Owen, eagerly.

"Their name was Mildmay," answered Mrs. Arnold. "I remember the first time I saw the picture, (which was in Mrs.

Mildmay's dressing-room,) *she* was not in the room, and I asked the eldest child whose likeness it was? and she told me it was a portrait of her mamma's cousin."

"Pray, Ma'am," asked Lieutenant Parry, "where does the family reside?"

"*That*," said Mrs. Arnold, "will not be readily discovered: for, when I left them, they were about to change their residence, in consequence of Mrs. Mildmay's extreme dejection of spirits, and a change of scene was recommended. Mr. Mildmay told me they would go into Scotland, and then settle in some distant part of England, if he could meet with a residence he liked. I had no further intercourse with them; for, after my marriage, Mr. Arnold disliked my keeping up the correspondence, as he conceived it was some peculiarity in religion that made Mrs Mildmay so melancholy."

"What was there peculiar in her religion?" enquired Mrs. Jervis.

"Ah!" replied Mrs. Arnold, "*that* too is a question I cannot solve. I was young, my dear Madam, and I dare say I was prejudiced, and formed my opinions hastily."—Here Emma cast a significant

glance at Maria.—“Mrs. Mildmay kept very much alone, excepting the time she spent with her children. I used to think it a sad pity that her fine open face should be the very picture of grief.”

“Was she morose or irritable?”

“O! no: for, although I very seldom saw her smile, I never met with one so gentle and placid; or, I may say, so kind and good.”

“Pray, Ma’am,” said Mr. Darnley, “did you ever hear what Mrs. Mildmay’s name was before she married? or, what was the name of her cousin?”

CHAPTER XXIV.

"It is because Thy precious blood
Has bought for us the Spirit's gift,—
O thought, to holler mood
Our grovelling soul to lift!"

THE conversation was here suddenly interrupted. Mr. Wilson, who had been called out of the room by a servant, now returned, accompanied by M. Verdan: old Susan followed leading the children. It was an interesting spectacle: every eye was fastened on the strangers. Maria stepped forward, and brought the children to the ladies; while Mr. Wilson led their father towards the vicar, who hastened to give him "the right hand of fellowship." A cordial greeting from every one in the circle succeeded: all seemed anxious to express the pleasure it gave them to see a friend of Mr. Wilson's, of whom they had heard such extraordinary accounts.

The remainder of the evening was spent

in listening to the interesting foreigner's relation of his conversion from the cold deadening theory of deism, to the pure faith of the Gospel; interspersed with anecdotes of the persecutions he had endured, and the deliverances which the providence of God had wrought out for him.

At the usual time for evening worship in the family, poor Mrs. Parry was brought in a reclining chair into an adjoining apartment, the door of which opened into that in which the company were assembled; so that she could easily hear the exposition and prayer. The former part of the service was ably executed by M. Verdan, who, notwithstanding his foreign accent, spoke English with sufficient fluency to be readily understood. The portion he selected was the ninety-first Psalm, which afforded him ample scope for expatiating on the everlasting safety of the people of God, in connexion with the person and Messiahship of the Lord Jesus. Then followed a hymn, of which I here give my readers a transcript:—

“How happy is the Christian's state!
His sins are all forgiven:

A cheering ray confirms the grace,
And lifts his hopes to heaven.

“ Though, in the rugged paths of life,
He heaves the pensive sigh,
Yet, trusting in his God, he finds
Delivering grace is nigh.

“ If, to reclaim his wandering steps,
He feel the chastening rod ;
The gentle stroke shall bring him back
To his forgiving God.

“ And, when the welcome message comes
To quit his house of clay,
His soul in peace to realms of bliss
Shall wing her happy way.”

All the little band united in lifting up their voices according as God had given them ability to sing the praises of his redeeming love. And the service was concluded by the vicar in a heart-stirring prayer.

That night, Mr. Darnley made a memorandum in his diary, noting it as one of the most remarkable periods in his life:— “ How marvellous,” he remarked, “ are the ways of the Almighty! My old friend Wilson! what a change! he, that was so prejudiced against the disciples of the cross, has now opened his mansion to the

most heavenly-minded of the Lord's people. Here have I enjoyed not only the society of my friend with our beloved pastor, Jervis; but I have witnessed the first meeting of those two most eminent ambassadors of Christ, Jervis and Verdan, and have heard them rehearsing to each other the wonders of grace in their own experience."

At breakfast the following morning, Mr. Darnley renewed his enquiry of Mrs. Arnold relative to the portrait.

"It was only once," said Mrs. Arnold, "that I heard the name: it was 'Hubbard;' and I remember I always thought *that* too was Mrs. Mildmay's name before her marriage."

"Now," rejoined Mr. Darnley, "I wonder if there is any inscription in the little Testament!"

"I was on the point of observing," said the vicar, "that, while the book was in my hands, I was searching for some clew of that kind. I saw 'Huber' in the titlepage, and I perceived that one of the fly-leaves was fastened down, on the under side of which I could discern some writing. Perhaps Mr. Parry would permit us to loosen the leaf."

Owen, who was in his mother's room, was now sent for, and readily intrusted the book to Mr. Jervis, who carefully raised up the leaf, which had been slightly gummed down. "Ah!" exclaimed the vicar, "here is 'Hubbard.' It looks like a lady's handwriting; and there is this difference, that on this leaf we have 'S. Hubbard,' whereas on the titlepage it is 'J. Huber:' so that it seems as though it had been given to Mr. Huber by a person of the name of Hubbard. Well: we are sure of this, that by whatever *human* hand this precious little book was conveyed into Mr. Huber's possession, it was sent to that afflicted stranger by Him, whose way is in the sea, and whose footsteps are not known; and, in this instance, I do think He had a purpose of mercy to fulfil."

"Is there any date?" asked Mr. Darnley.

"Yes, here it is," said Mr. Jervis.

"Then," continued Mr. Darnley, "if Mrs. Arnold do not think it an impertinent question, I would ask her whether it was *before* or *after* that date that she knew the Mildmays?"

Mrs. Arnold, looking at the date, said

that her connexion with them took place many years *after* that period,—at least fifteen.

“Some very reasonable conjectures might be suggested by that circumstance,” observed Mr. Darnley.

“Well, my young friend,” said Mr. Jervis, resuming his remarks, while he placed the Testament in the lieutenant’s hand, with an affectionate pressure,—“well, my young friend, it would seem needless to commend this little treasure to your regard: you received it under such extraordinary circumstances as must surely endear it to you as long as you live. I would, however, make free to admonish you, that the bare possession of the book will do you little good: the Spirit of God alone can make it effectual in leading you to a saving knowledge of Christ. Search the word; pray over it; and the Lord bless it to your soul!” Owen thanked the affectionate pastor, with tears.

Mrs. Arnold told Owen she would write to a friend of hers, who, she thought, could find out where the Mildmays had fixed their abode.

Mr. Wilson’s friends now ordered their

carriages, and took their departure; a day having been fixed, on which Mr. and Mrs. Darnley invited them all to the Lodge.

Mr. Wilson soon began to perceive that the friends and companions of his former life were strongly prejudiced against his new opinions in religion, which they termed "methodistical conceits." There were but few among them, who did not openly express their contempt of "the new doctrines;" while it was only in two or three instances that this benevolent man could persuade an old acquaintance dispassionately to weigh the difference between the pleasures of sin, and the joy and peace of believing in JESUS.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Rejoice for a sister deceased,
Our loss is her infinite gain;
A soul out of prison released,
And freed from its bodily chain.

"With songs let us follow her flight,
And mount with her spirit above;
Escaped to the mansions of light,
And lodged in the Eden of love."

DURING Mr. Jervis's visit at Norgrove House, he took frequent opportunities of conversing and praying with the Widow Parry, who, as her bodily frame became gradually weaker, was advancing in knowledge and heavenly-mindedness. After the kind vicar's departure, M. Verdan continued these pastoral visits; while Owen never relaxed in his attentions, constantly administering to her wants, and watching at her bed-side.

One morning, when Maria alone was with her, she said, "I am aware that my last hour is rapidly approaching. I wish

I could once more partake of the Holy Communion. I do not trust in the ordinance as a means of obtaining forgiveness, or of securing my soul's peace. O! no.—Blessed be His holy name! all *that* is already done: His precious blood has paid the full price. But I think it is becoming I should offer this as my last testimony to my undivided reliance on His righteousness alone; that I may bear witness again before I die that He is all my salvation and all my desire.—My soul longs too for the comfort and refreshment He can and will vouchsafe to me in those pledges of His love. Will you, my dear Miss Wilson, consult your dear father and Mr. Verdan on the subject, and ask them if they would approve of my son's being permitted to share the privilege with me?"

Maria, bathed in tears, instantly sought her father and M. Verdan, and made known the dying widow's request. The foreign pastor suggested that their friend Jervis should officiate. Mr. Wilson, therefore, having obtained the concurrence of the minister of the parish, sent for the Vicar of Maymead, who, on his arrival, found several of the family assembled in the

sick-chamber. Owen was kneeling on one side of the bed, near his scarcely breathing mother, who had been earnestly exhorting him to rest nowhere short of Christ. Mrs. Pearson and Maria were on the opposite side, applying a little cooling liquid to the sufferer's parched lips. Mr. Wilson and Verdan were standing at the foot of the bed. Old Susan, George, and two other domestics, who had evinced a real change of character, were also present. Every one was deeply affected.

Mr. Jervis entered with a noiseless step: a few silent greetings were exchanged as he drew near the bed-side. He then spoke a word or two of searching enquiry, in answer to which the meek-spirited widow whispered, in broken sentences, the utterance of her heart:—"Jesus is precious!—He is with me.—I have had a hard struggle:—it was the enemy; but I cried unto the Lord, and he delivered me.—Why should I doubt my acceptance? the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.—In the Lord alone have I righteousness and strength!"

The faithful pastor then proceeded to administer the sacred rite, in which all the

little congregation participated with the departing saint. He paused just before the final close, and quietly intimated his wish for a prayer from his brother minister, Verdan; who, in compliance with the call, poured forth the petitions of a heart filled with joy and peace in believing. Mr. Jervis then pronounced the benediction; and thus concluded the ministration of "those holy mysteries," which, under the Lord's blessing, became exceedingly strengthening and refreshing to the souls of his waiting servants.

In the course of the ensuing night, the happy sufferer breathed her expiring sigh with the name of Jesus on her lips. Mrs. Pearson and Maria were with her during her last moments.

This closing scene, in connexion with all that she had witnessed in the character and at the bed-side of her beloved Mrs. Parry, made an abiding impression on the mind of Mrs. Pearson; who now felt deeply convinced that the *clearest* views of the doctrines of grace bring with them the *strongest* claims for humility, watchfulness, and diligence, in the believer's walk and conversation.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"When Thou dost favour any action,
It runs—it flies!"
Herbert.

OWEN, who was consoled after his parent's decease, by undiminished testimonies of Mr. Wilson's friendship, became anxious for intelligence respecting Captain Huber's surviving connexions. He was not kept long, however, in suspense: for Mrs. Arnold exerted herself with the kindest promptitude in seeking for information, and at length succeeded in learning from one of her correspondents that Mrs. Mildmay had been dead five or six years, and that after that event Mr. Mildmay returned to his former residence. It was also stated that the eldest daughter had married a physician of the name of Buchan.

"There is a Dr. Buchan," said Mr. Wilson, "lately come into the adjoining

county, and if he be the same, Mrs. Arnold would no doubt be pleased in having an opportunity of renewing her acquaintance with her old pupil; while she would at the same time be a medium of introduction for *you*, Mr. Parry. Our horses will take you with the greatest ease." Maria was commissioned, therefore, to write to Mrs. Arnold, who gladly accepted the offer, and accompanied Lieutenant Parry to the town in which the doctor had taken up his residence.

Mrs. Arnold was put down at Doctor Buchan's door, while Owen proceeded to the inn to await the result of her interview with Mrs. Buchan. That lady instantly recognised her old preceptress, whom she welcomed with real pleasure. After a little conversation, Mrs. Arnold looked around her, and observed the memorable portrait hanging over an Indian cabinet.

"I well remember that portrait," said she.

"O! yes; Mr. Hubbard's," said Mrs. Buchan: "and I well remember pointing it out to you; for it was one of the things which were then just arrived from Mrs. Hubbard's old house, (Mr. Hubbard's

mother's.) It was soon after her death, Mrs. Arnold, that you came to us: and she had left all her things to my dear mother."

While Mrs. Buchan was speaking, Mrs. Arnold was still looking at the picture.

Mrs. Buchan continued—"Captain Hubbard went abroad many years ago: I never saw him: his friends never heard what became of him, and I think *that* was a burden on my dear mother's mind: because I found among her papers—for everything she had came to me at her death—some writings which plainly indicate how earnestly and constantly she prayed that 'the Almighty would preserve his life, and convert him to the true Christian religion:' and I have often observed her eyes fixed upon this picture, while the tear was stealing down her cheek. But, my dear Mrs. Arnold, *you* too are weeping! what can make the portrait so mournfully interesting to *you*?"

"Well, my dear Mrs. Buchan," replied Mrs. Arnold, "it will surprise you, when I tell you that I have met a young military man, who has in his possession a miniature, intrusted to him by his captain

on the field of battle, so strikingly like the painting, that I am persuaded it must have been intended for the same person."

Owen was instantly sent for. His account of the commissariat and the sight of the miniature and Testament deeply affected Mrs. Buchan, and convinced her that M. Huber was no other than the long-lost Captain Hubbard. "O!" she exclaimed, "what a consolation it would have been to my dear afflicted mother could she have known all this!" Owen left the miniature with Mrs. Buchan, but said he could not part with the Testament, which she said she could not of course wish him to do.

Dr. Buchan and his younger brother now came in; and on being informed of the strange disclosure that had been made, the doctor shewed Lieutenant Parry many marks of kindness. It happened that the doctor's brother was about to join the same regiment as that in which Owen held his commission; a circumstance which led to an intimate and lasting friendship between them.

At parting, Mrs. Buchan and Mrs. Arnold expressed themselves mutually de-

sirous of seeing each other again; and Owen was invited, when he left Mr. Wilson's on his way to his regiment, to spend a day at the doctor's, and accompany his young brother officer to their head quarters.

Dr. and Mrs. Buchan also soon became acquainted with Mr. and Miss Wilson, and were frequent visitors at Norgrove House. It has been said that, in consequence of this intercourse, a remarkable change took place in the doctor's opinions, who before this period had been an enthusiastic admirer of the republican, Paine. Mrs. Buchan and Maria were kindred spirits, and became closely attached to each other.

CHAPTER XXVII.

“ Our earthly ties are weak,
Whereon we dare not rest:
For time dissolves, and death will break,
The sweetest and the best.
Yet there's a tie which must remain,
Which time and death assault in vain.”

I MUST now return to the history of M. Verdan, and give my kind and patient readers all the remaining memorials I have on record concerning that eminent servant of Christ.

Through the persuasions of the grateful and generous Mr. Wilson, who of course sustained all the expence, Verdan was induced to place his darling children under Miss Melville's charge. Old Susan, who declared she could not live if they were separated from her, was allowed to accompany them. After this arrangement took place, Verdan would frequently walk to Mrs. Melville's cottage, where he would spend an hour with his dear little Chary

and Madeline, who were making rapid improvement under the fostering care of their kind instructress. On these occasions he always spent part of the time in conversing with Mrs. and Miss Melville. The former was entirely confined to her room, and experienced great comfort in his prayers and expositions. The children soon became very fond of Eliza Melville, and old Susan made herself very useful in the family.

After the lapse of a few months, Mr. Wilson succeeded, through the medium of his old friend, D'Albert, in obtaining a clerical appointment for Verdan in the island of Jersey, where there was a community of French protestants anxiously desirous of having the Gospel faithfully ministered among them. Verdan, therefore, went immediately to the cottage to communicate the intelligence. He found Miss Melville with her little charge in their usual sitting-room, and told her of his new appointment. The news was received by Eliza Melville with some degree of emotion. She remarked, however, that it was the will of God, and that a blessing would attend his labours among that

people. "And now, my darling children," said Verdan, taking the delicate little Madeline on his knee, while his arm was folded round his dear boy, "this will be my last visit for a long time; for I must go a great way off to see those good people of God."

"Well, but, papa," cried little Chary, "Miss Melville says 'it is the will of God,' and so I know you will come back again one day."

The fond father could only reply to this remark in tears and kisses. "But," said he to Miss Melville, "I must see your dear mother: and, if you please, Susan can come to the children while you and I spend half an hour with Mrs. Melville." He now related some further particulars of an interesting nature respecting his new destination, and having prayed and taken leave of the aged saint, returned with Eliza to the children.

As they entered the room, Chary ran up to him, exclaiming, "Papa, what do you think we mean to call Miss Melville while you are gone away? Cannot you guess, papa? Why, we mean to call her 'Mamma,' to be sure."

"Ah! my sweet boy!" said the fond father, with a sigh, "I wish you really had a mamma!"

"Surely, Sir," said Eliza Melville, "you cannot wish their revered mother, of whose happy departure you have told us such interesting accounts, back again in this world of suffering!"

"O! no: my dear Miss Melville," said Verdan, "no: *that* I could not desire; but my merry little Chary has playfully uttered the real wish of my heart. Can you, my dear friend, ever consent to be called their mamma, and to take the place of a mother to these dear children?"

Eliza Melville was much affected by this proposal, said that it would require serious consideration, and, pointing to the door of her mother's apartment, was about to allude to its aged inhabitant, when M. Verdan interrupted her, and said he was well aware of that difficulty; but as there was no probability that her beloved parent could remain much longer in a state of such extreme weakness, he would patiently wait until she should be called to her rest, if, after that event, Eliza would become his wife.

“I see you are hesitating,” said he; “I will, therefore, ask no more now than that you will seek your heavenly Father’s guidance, and then write to me. Write soon: and may our gracious God direct you for good to me and my dear children!” He then hurried away, and on the following day took his departure for the island.

He was accompanied by Mr. and Miss Wilson. The health of the latter had evidently suffered from the long confinement, anxiety, and watchfulness she had undergone during her beloved Mrs. Parry’s illness. And her fond father conceived that the excursion, sea-air, and change of scene, would tend to restore her sinking strength;—an expectation, which, to his great joy, he soon saw realized. He hired a commodious cottage on the island, contiguous to Verdan’s church and field of labour. Here they spent several happy weeks, during which Verdan resided with them.

The first packet of letters from England brought Verdan a favourable reply from Miss Melville; a circumstance which was peculiarly gratifying to Maria Wilson,

whose grateful affection for her had never abated.

On the return of Mr. Wilson and his daughter to their native shores, they learned that Mrs. Melville, after having lingered for some time in an almost unconscious state, was released from her earthly house of clay. Mr. Jervis preached a funeral-sermon on the occasion. His text consisted of those memorable words in Psalm cxvi:—"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." And, after shewing how the love of God towards His people is manifested in every step of their pilgrimage as they pass to the land of their inheritance, he spoke without reserve of the character of the departed saint; who, he said, was so well known to the older members of the congregation, that the bare mention of her name would bring to their remembrance the graces they had so often admired in her;—her remarkable simplicity and singleness of heart, and her love for all the saints.

I must not omit to inform my readers that an alliance between Maria Wilson and Mr. Edward Darnley, to the entire satisfaction of both families, had been in

contemplation. This highly-gifted young man had taken orders, and was labouring in a populous district,—a field which called forth all his energy. His bold, faithful, and uncompromising declarations of Gospel-truth, although delivered with the most affectionate earnestness, raised a hostile spirit among the self-righteous and worldly-minded; while it pleased God, nevertheless, to own and bless the word to the conversion of many others, who were constrained to acknowledge that the preaching of the cross was to them “the power of God.”

To this union the affectionate Emma looked forward with unmingled pleasure: and, after the interval of a few months, the Vicar of Maymead enjoyed the privilege of “joining together in holy wedlock,” on one and the same day, Edward Darnley and Maria Wilson, and Denys Verdan and Eliza Melville.

“The benevolent merchant” gradually withdrew from commercial pursuits, and consecrated his active habits, his knowledge of the world, and his well-stored purse, to the relief of the poor, and the diffusion of that inestimable Gospel, by means

of which he had himself been so happily called out of darkness into light. He purchased a residence close to the new abode of his beloved Maria, and lived to see her the mother of several sweet children, whom she brought up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

"Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD.

"The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.

"Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel." Psalm cxxviii. 4—6.

And now, my kind readers, having brought my little narrative to its close, I cannot take my final leave of you without offering a few remarks to your thoughtful consideration.

Permit me then,

FIRST, To observe that true peace can only be found in Christ: that while the heart continues dependent on its own resources, and pursuing its own schemes in search of happiness, all the fruit of its toil will be vanity and vexation

of spirit;—an increase of separation from God, and of bondage to Satan and sin:—“The end of those things is death.” (Rom. vi. 21.)

SECONDLY, That it is the Spirit of God alone that causes the Gospel to be effectual in the heirs of salvation, to bring them to Christ by faith:—“It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing——” (John vi. 63.)

THIRDLY, That Christ only is the righteousness and strength of them that believe:—“Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. iii. 24.) “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” (Coloss. i. 14.)

FOURTHLY, That salvation is altogether of grace:—“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and THAT not of yourselves: *it is the gift of God.*” (Ephes. ii. 8.)

FIFTHLY, That the guilty are invited to seek mercy in Christ:—“Let the wicked

forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isaiah lv. 7.) "Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.) "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.)

SIXTHLY, That, although there is much suffering in the service of Christ, they only have true peace, who walk in faith, and love, and submission to the will of God in him:—"Great peace have they which love thy law." (Psalm cxix. 165.) "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." (John x. 27.) "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." (Acts xiv. 22.) "Casting all your care upon Him; for he careth for you." (1 Peter v. 7.) "For He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Heb. xiii. 5.) "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling

savour." (Ephes. v. 2.) "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1. Peter i. 13.) "Be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." (2 Peter iii. 14.)

Dear reader; may the Spirit of the Lord give thee understanding in these things!

Farewell!

FINIS.







